SPIDER-MAN®: THE OTHER™ EVOLVE OR DIE

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THE Other

Straczynski • David • Hudlin • Deodato • Wieringo • Lee

The startling super-story that will turn the wall-crawler's world upside down!

Haunted by unsettling dreams. Disturbed by a growing sense of dread. Convinced that people are out to get him. Spidey faces his biggest threat yet – a foe so insidious he can't hope to handle it alone. With friends like Reed Richards, Stephen Strange and Hank Pym, he won't have to. But can even the world's greatest minds change the course of fate? And if they could, would they dare? Having finally accepted the truth, Peter Parker decides to put the red and blue tights in the closet and spend some quality time with Aunt May and MJ. But Morlun's got other plans – and this time, there's no Ezekiel to help the web-slinger. Sit down for this one, True Believer – you've never seen a fight quite like this, as Peter faces the one foe he's never defeated! Beaten to the edge of death, hovering in a place short of heaven or hell, Spidey is about to embark on a journey unlike anything he's ever experienced. If he's going to have any hope to thwart Morlun's obscene mission, then he's got two choices: Evolve or die...!

Collecting *Amazing Spider-Man #525-528, Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man #1-4* and *Marvel Knights Spider-Man #19-22*.

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THE

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 1 OF 12

PETER DAVID • MIKE WIERINGO

Friendly Neighborhood SPIDER-MAN® #1

'RING!
KESEL '05

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"SO I HAD THIS WEIRD DREAM, MJ. IT STARTED WITH MORLUN...THAT LUNATIC WHO WANTED TO 'EAT' MY SPIDER-POWERS, REMEMBER?

"AND HE'S ROLLING A BODY INTO A MORGUE.

"AND I'M AFRAID IT'S ME... EXCEPT IF I'M DEAD AND INSIDE THE BAG, I COULDN'T BE SEEING IT, RIGHT?

"THEN KRAVEN THE HUNTER IS THERE, AND IT'S...WELL, IT'S PRETTY STRANGE...

"AND THEN I SEE UNCLE BEN, AND HE'S SAYING--

TO EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON. A TIME TO LIVE...A TIME TO...

"AND THEN EVERYTHING'S BLACK...EXCEPT FOR THE DICE, WITH SNAKE EYES...

"AND A VOICE WHISPERING, 'YOU LOSE.'

"AND EVER SINCE THEN..."

...I'VE BEEN AFRAID I'M GONNA LOSE IT ALL.

I MEAN, IT WAS *ALMOST* EASIER WHEN I HAD NOTHING. WHEN I WAS SCRAMBLING TO RUB TWO NICKELS TOGETHER AND KEEP A ROOF OVER MY HEAD.

MMMM...?

THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH HAVING A TON OF BLESSINGS. YOU KEEP WAITING FOR GOD TO NOTICE AND SAY, "WAIT, THAT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN." KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

MMM...

AREN'T *YOU* WORRIED MY LUCK'LL RUN TRUE AND I'LL LOSE IT ALL?

UNH-UNH

THAT'S OPTIMISTIC. I MEAN, LOOK AT THE FACTS.

I'M IN THE AVENGERS. WE'RE LIVING IN STARK TOWERS, RENT FREE. AUNT MAY'S HEALTHY. I'M MARRIED TO *YOU*. IT'S ALL GOING TOO *WELL* TO LAS--

PETER...YOU *KNOW* I LOVE YOU. YOU KNOW YOUR CONCERNS ARE MY CONCERNS.

BUT COULD YOU PLEASE, FOR GOD'S SAKE, FOCUS ON THE *HERE* AND *NOW?*

SORRY.

I MEAN, CRIPES! GET YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME, OKAY?

I *SAID* I'M SORRY.

JUST FEELING A LITTLE *UNAPPRECIATED*, IS ALL I'M SAYING.

AW MAN, MJ, WHATTAYA *WANT* FROM ME?

MMMM...

OH. *RIIIIIGHT...*

RIGHT, COME ON. MOVE IT ALONG. HAVEN'T GOT ALL DAY.

BANK·NY

TAXI

YOU BET YOU DON'T, PUNK. 'CAUSE THE COPS ARE GONNA NAIL YOUR BUTT...

RIGHT, BECAUSE OF THE SILENT ALARM ONE OF THESE NICE LADIES NO DOUBT TRIPPED.

ONE LITTLE PROBLEM WITH THAT...

NEED A NEW ACCOUNT?

K·NY

I HAD SOME FUN WITH THE *TRAFFIC LIGHTS* HERE-ABOUTS.

"IT'S AMAZING HOW PUTTING THEM JUST A *LITTLE* OUT OF SYNCH CAN CAUSE TRAFFIC JAMS FOR TEN BLOCKS. AND LAST I CHECKED...

"...COPS CAN'T FLY.

"AH."

ALL RIGHT. *NOT* UNEXPECTED.

I'LL BE RIGHT BACK. MEANTIME...

...WHICHEVER BAG YOU SLIPPED A BLUE DYE CANISTER INTO...*REMOVE* IT.

I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE--

SWEETHEART, IF I OPEN MY LOOT AND SOMETHING *EXPLOSIVE* AND *BLUE* GOES OFF IN *MY* FACE...

...I *WILL* FIND YOU AND PUT A BULLET IN YOUR BRAIN...

...BY *HAND*.

SO PICK YOUR POISON.

BANK·NY

OH, WOW! A NEW BAD GUY!

I CAN *TELL*, Y'KNOW...

...'CAUSE YOU STILL HAVE THAT NEW BAD GUY SMELL.

SPIDER-MAN: THE OTHER--EVOLVE OR DIE PART ONE

SHOCK

PETER DAVID	MIKE WIERINGO	KARL KESEL	PAUL MOUNTS	VC'S CORY PETIT	MOLLY LAZER et AUBREY SITTERSON	ANDY SCHMIDT	TOM BREVOORT	AXEL ALONSO	JOE QUESADA	DAN BUCKLEY
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BLAM!
BLAM!
WOW. YOU REALLY *ARE* NEW!
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?
THWIP
I'M YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-MAN.
I *LAUGH* AT BULLETS.
INTERESTING. SEE, *THESE* BULLETS...
...THEY LAUGH *BACK*.
HUH?
YOU GOTTA BE *KIDDING* ME!

WAIT...HERE'S THE *BEST* PART. NOW THAT THEY'RE LOCKED ON...

WHAT'RE YOU--?

...THEY'LL AVOID *ANY OTHER* PERSON...

THAT SHOULD KEEP HIM ENTERTAINED FOR A WHILE.

...JUST TO GET TO *YOU.*

OKAY, NOBODY GET UP.

ARRRHHH!!! I WASN'T GETTING UP!!!!

BLAM!

I'M MERCURIAL.

AH. YOU MADE THE *RIGHT* DECISION.

STILL, IT NEEDS SOMETHING, RIGHT ABOUT...

...THERE.

OH GOD...PLEASE... NO...I...

...AND THERE...AND THERRRRE...

...I HAVE A BABY GIRL AT HOME... PLEASE...

WELL, THEN, YOU TELL YOUR BABY GIRL...

...THAT TRACER SAID "HI."

HAVE A *NICE* DAY.

"LOOK...STEVE...I APPRECIATE YOU OFFERING TO HELP, Y'KNOW, TEACH ME TO BE A BETTER...I DUNNO, *WHATEVER* I AM..."

"OFFERING? PETER, MARY JANE HERE ASKED ME TO."

"SHE *WHAT*? MJ, YOU--?"

"WELL, HONEY, YOU WERE THE ONE WHO WAS WORRIED ABOUT DYING..."

"DYING?! WHO SAID *DYING*?"

"YOU DREAMT ABOUT A *MORGUE*, PETER. I DIDN'T HAVE TO BE FREUD TO FIGURE IT OUT. AND STEVE AGREED..."

"MJ, THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO STAY BETWEEN US! YOU--!"

"PETER, HONEY...ARE YOU GONNA TELL ME I CAN'T CONFIDE IN CAPTAIN AMERICA?"

"OKAY...POINT TAKEN. I GUESS HE'S TRUSTWORTHY..."

SPIDER-MAN: THREAT OR MENACE? DECIDE FOR YOURSELF

PUBLISHER J. JONAH JAMESON STRIKING A BALANCE EVERY DAY IN THE DAILY BUGLE

"YOU *GUESS*...?!"

"OKAY, OKAY! *NO PROBLEM!* NOW LEGGO MY EAR, MJ!"

I'LL TRY TO LIVE UP TO YOUR CONFIDENCE. NOW... FOLLOW MY MOVEMENTS. MOVE SLOWLY, PLAYING YOUR MUSCLES AGAINST EACH OTHER.

AND WORK ON FOCUSING.

WHAT AM I FOCUSING, EXACTLY?

YOUR CHI.

MY "CHEE?"

YES.

WELL...NO PROBLEM THERE. I'M A CHI WIZ. GET IT? A...

Y'KNOW, I'M *WAY* FUNNIER WHEN I'M WEARING THE MASK.

CAN I, MAYBE, GO PUT IT ON?

NO!

Okay.

YOU'RE A *TEACHER*, PETER. WHY ARE YOU NERVOUS ABOUT *LEARNING?*

I'M *NOT*... EXACTLY.

THEN *WHAT* EXACTLY?

IT'S JUST... I'VE ALWAYS OPERATED ON *INSTINCT*. AND I'M WORRIED YOU MIGHT TELL ME SOMETHING LIKE...

INSTINCT CAN KILL YOU.

RIGHT! LIKE *THAT*, FOR INSTANCE.

THAT'S NOT A "FOR INSTANCE." IT *CAN* KILL YOU.

OH YEAH, *THIS'LL* HELP ME SLEEP BETTER.

IN 1977, TWO 747s--A PAN AM AND A KLM FLIGHT--COLLIDED ON A RUNWAY IN THE CANARY ISLANDS. EVERYONE ON THE KLM PLANE WAS KILLED INSTANTLY. ONLY SIXTY OUT OF NEARLY 400 ON THE PAN AM PLANE SURVIVED.

THE THING IS...MANY MORE *COULD* HAVE ESCAPED DEATH ON THE PAN AM FLIGHT.

BUT THEIR MINDS COULDN'T PROCESS WHAT WAS HAPPENING, SO THEIR INSTINCTS KEPT THEM IN THEIR SEATS, WAITING FOR GUIDANCE.

THEN THERE'S SCUBA DIVERS WHO DROWN WITH OXYGEN STILL IN THEIR TANKS.

SOMETHING ***OBSTRUCTS*** THEIR BREATHING PASSAGES. ***INSTINCT*** COMPELS THEM TO PULL OFF THEIR MASKS IN ORDER TO CLEAR THE OBSTRUCTION...

...AND THEY ***DIE.***

STEVE, IF I CAN'T RELY ON MY INSTINCTS...I'VE GOT NOTHING. AND THAT'S, FRANKLY, KINDA SCARY.

I UNDERSTAND. BUT THAT SHOULDN'T DETER YOU FROM LOOKING BEYOND IT.

IF YOU WANT TO SURVIVE TO A RIPE OLD AGE, YOU KNOW WHAT YOU NEED?

AN ICE FLOE TO BE ***FROZEN ALIVE*** IN?

DROLL. ***VERY*** DROLL.

PETER...ALL I'M SAYING IS THAT ONE CONSIDERED, CALCULATED MOVE CAN BE BETTER THAN TWENTY ***REACTIVE*** MOVES, NO MATTER HOW WELL-EXECUTED THEY ARE.

AND THAT REQUIRES ***FOCUS.***

"YOUR SPEED, YOUR STRENGTH... IT'S AMAZING. SPECTACULAR.

"BUT SOMETIMES YOU NEED TO STOP.

DELIVERY

SALE 2 FOR 1

"TAKE A DEEP BREATH. FOCUS YOUR ENERGY... YOUR CHI...

"REACH INTO YOURSELF. ENVISION YOURSELF ACCOMPLISHING THAT WHICH YOU THOUGHT YOU *COULDN'T.*

"*SEE* IT. *CONCENTRATE* ON IT. SLOW THE WORLD AROUND YOU SO THAT THERE'S ONLY YOU...AND YOUR GOAL...AND THEN...

"...DO IT!"

SHAK!
SHAK!
WHOA, DUDE.
YOU BET YOUR BUTT, "WHOA."
THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MAGIC LOVERS. AND NOTICE THAT, AT NO TIME, DID MY HANDS LEAVE MY--
--WRISTS?
AH... CRAP.
THAT'S GONNA HUR--
UNFFFF.
DUDE?

SO...SHALL I CALL YOU SPIDER-MAN? MR. MAN? OR YOU CAN TELL ME YOUR FIRST NAME IF YOU WISH.

LATELY IT'S LIKE I CAN FIELD A HOCKEY TEAM WITH ALL THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW MY NAME. SO HOW ABOUT, FOR NOW, WE KEEP IT "SPIDER-MAN." OR "SPIDEY."

WHATEVER.

WELL....CAP SAID YOU COULD BE TRUSTED, SO YEAH, OKAY I GUESS.

IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE MY PATIENT, THOUGH, I'LL BE RUNNING SOME BLOODWORK ON YOU. JUST ROUTINE.

THANKS FOR THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.

YOU WANT TO GO INTO MY OFFICE, CHECK MY DIPLOMAS?

NO...THAT'S NOT NECESSARY, DOCTOR CASTILLO...

YOU SHOULD. THEY'RE ***EDIBLE.*** MADE OUT OF MATZOH.

OKAY, I ***GET*** IT.

I DON'T THINK YOU DO.

I JUST TOOK A BULLET OUT OF YOUR SHOULDER. ACCORDING TO LAW, I HAVE TO REPORT IT TO THE POLICE, ALONG WITH ***ALL*** DETAILS OF THE VICTIM'S IDENTITY.

I'M ***NOT*** GOING TO DO THAT. JUST AS I HAVEN'T FOR A NUMBER OF OTHER WOUNDED HEROES WHO'D RATHER AVOID LEGAL SCRUTINY. IN SO DOING...I REGULARLY PUT MY LICENSE AT RISK.

YOU'RE SAYING DISCRETION IS A TWO-WAY STREET.

YOU'RE A MASTER OF UNDER-STATEMENT.

ACTUALLY, ALMOST ***NEVER.***

I BEGAN THIS...*SERVICE*...YEARS AGO. I SAW BRAVE PEOPLE RISKING THEIR LIVES, AND FELT THAT BINDING THEIR WOUNDS...

...CURING THEM OF THEIR SOMETIMES UNIQUE ILLS...

...WAS THE *LEAST* I COULD DO.

I WAS A FORMER CLASSMATE OF REED RICHARDS, SO HE VOUCHED FOR ME. SLOWLY, WORD ABOUT ME SPREAD.

WHY DIDN'T ANYONE TELL *ME?*

WHY *NOT?*

MAYBE THEY DIDN'T TRUST YOU.

PROBABLY BECAUSE THEIR *INITIAL* IMPULSE IS TO HIT YOU WITH A ROLLED UP NEWSPAPER.

THEY CAN'T SEE *ANY* PART OF YOUR FACE, YOU KEEP TO *YOURSELF,* AND YOU DRESS LIKE SOMETHING *ICKY.*

YOU'RE NOT THE *FIRST GUY* PEOPLE ARE GONNA INVITE TO A BOX SOCIAL, Y'KNOW?

POINT TAKEN, DOC.

I'LL CALL YOU WITH THE RESULTS. OKAY, SPIDER-MAN?

PETER.

MY NAME'S *PETER.*

FUNNY. YOU DON'T *LOOK* LIKE A "PETER."

YEAH, I HEAR THAT A *LOT.*

YOU KNOW WHAT *ELSE* I HEAR A LOT?

YOU'RE INSANE!

LOOK AT YOU! YOU'RE WOUNDED!

C'MON, MJ. YOU KNOW I GET BETTER FAST.

YEAH? WHAT IF YOU *DIE?* WHAT'RE THE ODDS OF YOU GETTING BETTER *THEN?*

SERIOUSLY? SURPRISINGLY GOOD.

PETER, WILL YOU LISTEN TO ME...

MJ, I'VE GOT TO DO THIS!

WHY?

BECAUSE I'M *SCARED,* OKAY?

I CAN...FEEL IT. *FEAR,* BURNING IN MY STOMACH LIKE FOOD POISONING.

AND I DON'T KNOW *WHY.* ALL I KNOW IS...IF I DON'T GET OUT THERE...*NOW...*

AND THAT'S A *BAD* THING... *HOW?*

...

...I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO KEEP DOING THIS AT *ALL.*

YOU...JUST HAVE TO TRUST ME THAT IT WOULD BE.

COULD YOU AT LEAST MAYBE BRING STEVE ALONG...?

AW, *C'MON*, MJ. IT'D BE LIKE BRINGING MY DAD TO WHOMP ON THE SCHOOL BULLY AFTER GETTING MY NOSE BLOODIED.

NOT SEEING A DOWNSIDE.

OH, CHECK IT OUT: THE PAPERS SAY THE GUY WHO SHOT ME CALLS HIMSELF "TRACER."

WELL, I'M TRACKING HIM VIA A *SPIDER-TRACER* I SLAPPED ON HIM BEFORE I RAN.

GOTTA *LOVE* THE IRONY.

UH-HUH. RIGHT UP THERE WITH LOVING YOU...

...IRONY'S A CLOSE SECOND.

AND MOVING UP *FAST.*

C'MON, C'MON, WHERE ARE YOU?

BEEN AN HOUR NOW. SHOULDER'S BURNING LIKE A SON OF A--

AH!

BINGO.

MOVING FAST CROSS-TOWN.

HELLOOOOO, NURSE.

HE MUST BE IN THAT LIMO.

HOW SWELL. MAYBE HE BOUGHT IT WITH THE MONEY HE STOLE.

SURE HOPE HE KEPT A *RECEIPT.*

GOTTA MOVE FAST, BEFORE WE GET OUT OF CAMERA RANGE.

GOOD OLD SPIDER-SENSE. MAYBE CAPTAIN "BULLETS DON'T BOTHER ME 'CAUSE I GOT THIS BIG FRISBEE TO HIDE BEHIND" AMERICA THINKS IT'S DISS-WORTHY...

...BUT I COULDN'T TRACK MY TRACERS WITHOUT IT.

SO MAYBE, WHEN IT COMES TO INSTINCTS...

...I SHOULD PUT MY BEST FOOT FORWARD!

KRAAASH

ARE YOU... OUT OF YOUR *MIND*?!?!

INTERESTING QUESTION.

WHY DON'T WE ASK YOUR *PASSENGER*?

HEY! LOVEBUG! THE QUESTION OF THE HOUR IS, AM *I* OUT OF MY *MIND*?!

WHY NOT FAVOR US WITH AN--

--ANSWER...?

YOU CAN READ MY ANSWER IN TOMORROW'S "BUGLE."

WELL, THIS IS JUST BAD ON SO *MANY* LEVELS...

OYYYYYY...

"HEY, TONY. CAN YOU LEND ME SOME MONEY TO REIMBURSE JONAH JAMESON FOR DAMAGE I DID TO HIS CAR IN THE LINE OF DUTY?

"BECAUSE I CAN'T SELL HIM THE PICTURES I TOOK SINCE HE KNOWS PETER PARKER WASN'T ANYWHERE AROUND."

YEAH. THAT SOUNDS GREAT.

OH, HERE COMES MORE GOOD NEWS.

RIING

YEAH?

PETER? THIS IS DOCTOR CASTILLO.

OH. HI.

WE NEED TO RUN SOME MORE TESTS.

HOW COME?

THE INITIAL TESTS... THEY INDICATED SOME THINGS THAT...

WHAT... KIND OF THINGS?

I'D RATHER NOT SAY AT THIS--

WHAT. KIND. OF THINGS?

BAD, PETER. VERY BAD.

SNAKE EYES. YOU LOSE.

TO BE CONTINUED... IN MARVEL KNIGHTS SPIDER-MAN #19

Friendly Neighborhood SPIDER-MAN

SPIDER-MAN

THE OTHER

: EVOLVE OR DIE

Next in SPIDER-MAN: THE OTHER

Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man #1 – Part 1
Marvel Knights Spider-Man #19 – Part 2
Amazing Spider-Man #525 – Part 3
By Peter David, Mike Wieringo, Pat Lee & Mike Deodato, Jr.

Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man #2 – Part 4
Marvel Knights Spider-Man #20 – Part 5
Amazing Spider-Man #526 – Part 6
By Reginald Hudlin, Mike Wieringo, Pat Lee & Mike Deodato, Jr.

Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man #3 – Part 7
Marvel Knights Spider-Man #21 – Part 8
Amazing Spider-Man #527 – Part 9
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Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man #4 – Part 10
Marvel Knights Spider-Man #22 – Part 11
Amazing Spider-Man #528 – Part 12
By Peter David & Mike Wieringo,
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MARVEL MAX 19

THE

HUNTER™

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 2 OF 12

PETER DAVID • PAT LEE

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THE OTHER

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 2 OF 12

PREVIOUSLY IN *Friendly Neighborhood* SPIDER-MAN #1

For the first time in a long while, life has been going pretty well for Peter Parker. He's got a cool new pad in Avengers Tower, a beautiful wife and loving aunt, and he just happens to be the coolest swinger in town—that wall-crawling, webbed wonder known as Spider-Man!

But one thing still eludes Peter—a good night's sleep. Terrible visions of death haunt his dreams. Are week-old Chinese leftovers causing the unrest or are these premonitions of something far more sinister?

Spider-Man tries to ignore the dreadful omens, but after being wounded in a battle with a new villain called the Tracer, his blood is checked and the doctor finds something so alarming in the diagnosis that she cannot discuss it with Peter over the phone.

And meanwhile, the mysterious Morlun—a parasitic hunter thought to have perished in a previous attempt to kill Peter and consume his life force—suddenly reappears to spy on the hero and his loved ones… and to wait for the opportune moment to strike!

"DENIAL"

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SPIDER-MAN: THE OTHER - EVOLVE OR DIE PART TWO: DIE!!!

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"AND IN A BERSERK ASSAULT UPON THIS NEWSPAPER'S PUBLISHER, THE MENACE-THAT-CRAWLS-LIKE-A-SPIDER..."

I DON'T BELIEVE IT. THIS *CAN'T* BE HAPPENING. IT'S LIKE EVERY TIME I TURN AROUND, THERE'S SOME NEW HORROR.

...HE'S CRAZY!

Editorial inside by J. Jonah Jameson

MARY JANE, CAN I READ THE PAPER WHEN YOU'RE--

OH!

SO...THAT'S A "NO," THEN?

WHY DOES HE *DO* THESE THINGS?

I KNOW HE *MEANS* WELL, BUT SOME OF THE THINGS HE DOES...IT'S...

GAWD!

"HE" WHO?

NO ONE YOU KNOW.

FIVE MINUTES TO CURTAIN! CAST TO FIRST POSITIONS, PLEASE!

"WHY DOES HE DO IT? FOR THAT MATTER...

"...WHY DO ANY OF YOU?"

SERIOUSLY, STEVE. I REALLY WANT TO KNOW. I MEAN...

DID YOU EVER SEE "MAN OF LA MANCHA?" IT'S A MUSICAL ABOUT DON QUIXOTE.

I'M NOT MUCH FOR MUSICALS.

GUESS THAT PROVES YOU'RE STRAIGHT. THREE IN THE CORNER.

HOW DOES THAT PROVE--?

ANYWAY, THIS WOMAN, ALDONZA, SINGS A SONG CALLED *"WHY DO YOU DO THE THINGS YOU DO?"*

'CAUSE SHE CAN'T FIGURE WHY QUIXOTE RIDES AROUND THE COUNTRY TRYING TO RIGHT WRONGS.

AND YOU'RE WONDERING WHETHER PETER, YOUR HUSBAND... WHETHER ALL OF US...

...ARE A GROUP OF INSANE KNIGHT ERRANTS?

KIND OF.

I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE PEOPLE ARE *ASKING* YOU TO DO IT.

YOU DON'T GET PAID FOR IT, LIKE COPS OR FIREMEN.

SIX BALL IN THE SIDE.

THINK OF EVERYTHING YOU GIVE UP IN ORDER TO DO WHAT YOU DO.

WHY DO YOU KEEP DOING THAT BUSINESS WITH THE POOL CUE?

'CAUSE I THOUGHT IT WAS COOL WHEN TOM CRUISE DID IT IN "*COLOR OF MONEY.*"

OOOKAY. TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION...

I SUPPOSE IT'S A SORT OF... A ***CALLING.*** SERVING A HIGHER PURPOSE.

PRIESTS, NUNS...***THEY*** HAVE TO GIVE THINGS UP TO DO WHAT THEY DO.

YOU MEAN YOU DO WHAT YOU DO BECAUSE GOD TOLD YOU TO?

I WOULDN'T SAY THAT, EXACTLY. THEN AGAIN...

...HE ***DOES*** MOVE IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS.

LOOK...YOU'RE NOT PRIESTS AND NUNS. YOU'RE CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND MY HUSBAND IS SPIDER-MAN. AND I'M...

AND YOU'RE WHAT?

WHAT'S GOING ON?

BRAVO! BRAVO!!

YOUR FAN'S BACK.

YUP. I SEE HIM.

YES! TERRIFIC! BEAUTIFUL! YOU'RE THE BEST, MARY JANE!

THAT MAKES...WHAT? THE FIFTEENTH PERFORMANCE HE'S SEEN THIS MONTH?

I'VE LOST COUNT.

DOES IT STRESS YOU OUT AT ALL?

YOU'D BE AMAZED WHAT IT TAKES TO STRESS ME OUT.

HEY! COME NEXT DOOR! YOU *GOTTA* SEE WHAT'S ON TV.

THIS *ISN'T* THE TRAILER FOR THE NEXT *HARRY POTTER* MOVIE AGAIN, IS IT, MURRAY?

NO, BETTER! IT'S SPIDER-MAN, MAYBE GETTING HIMSELF *KILLED!*

IT'S HAPPENING WAY UPTOWN! THIS LUNATIC CALLING HIMSELF TRACER HAS SOME KIND OF FLYING PLATFORM WITH A *BOMB* UNDER IT!

HE WAS THREATENING TO SET IT OFF UNLESS THE CITY GAVE HIM, LIKE, A HUNDRED MILLION BUCKS.

IT WAS MORE THAN THAT.

THAT'S WHAT THEY *SAID.*

THEN YOU DIDN'T HEAR RIGHT. IT--

WOULD YOU GUYS *SHUT UP!*

SOMEBODY TURN THE SOUND UP!

WHO'S GOT THE REMOTE?

I THOUGHT YOU DID.

DO I *LOOK* LIKE REMOTE GUY?

NO, BUT YOU ACT PRETTY REMOTE.

YOU CALL WHAT HE DOES ACTING?

OH HAR-DE-HAR-H--

FORGET IT!!!!

GREAT SHOW, MARY JANE! BEST PERFORMA--

NOT NOW, JOHNNY. NOT TONIGHT.

COULD I GET AN AUTOGRAPH...?

NOT NOW, I SAID!

WOW. WHAT A WITCH--

AHHHH!!

YOU DON'T INSULT HER!

YOU! DON'T! INSULT HER!

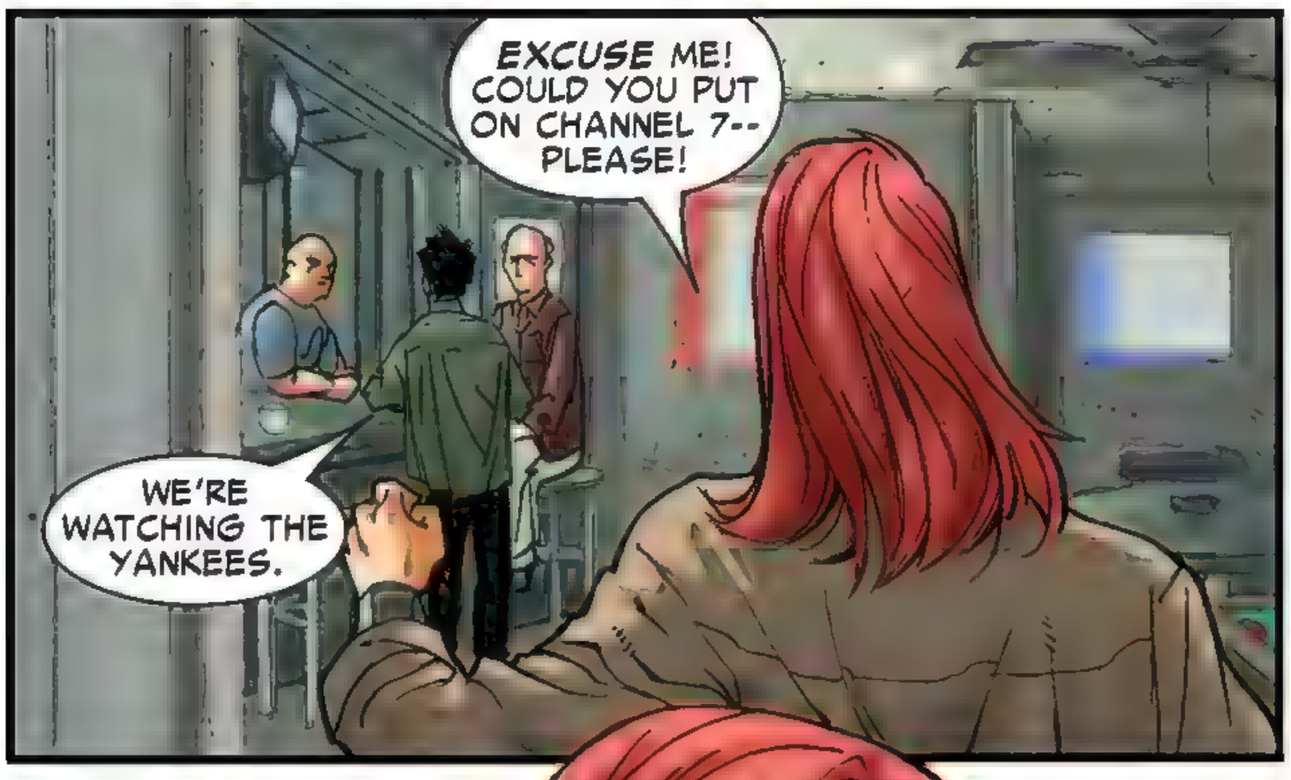
ACKKK! ARHHHH!!!

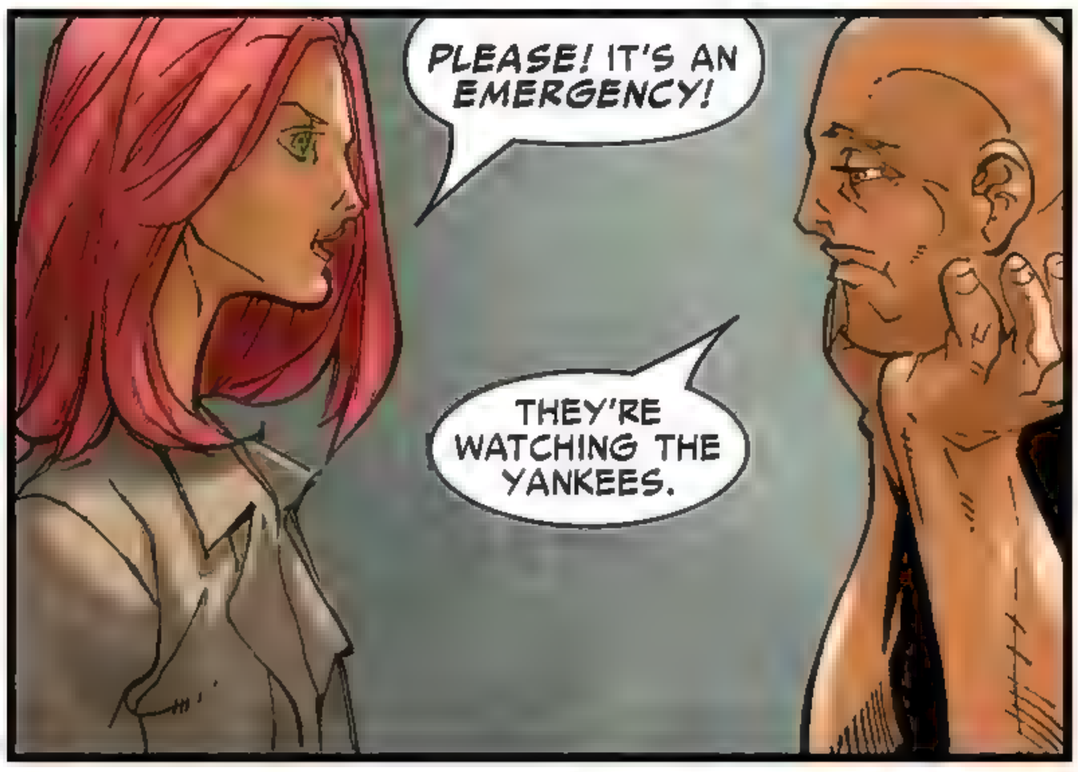
HOW ABOUT *YOU*? *YOU* GOT ANYTHING TO SAY, SMART GUY?

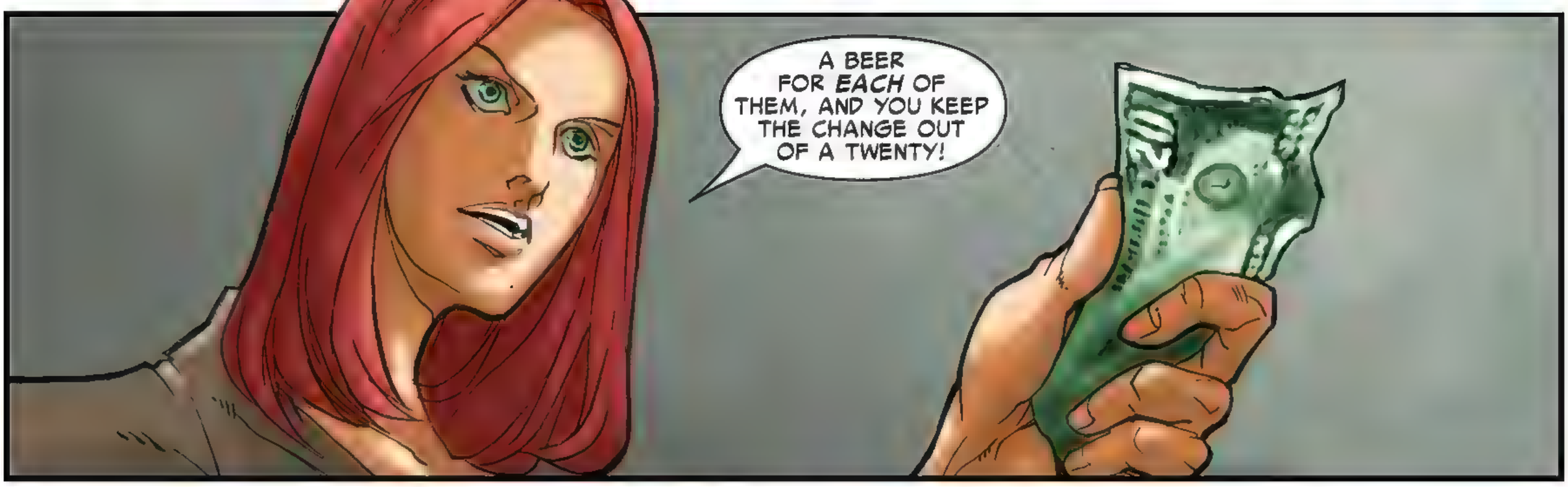
THE NAME IS MORLUN. NOT "SMART GUY."

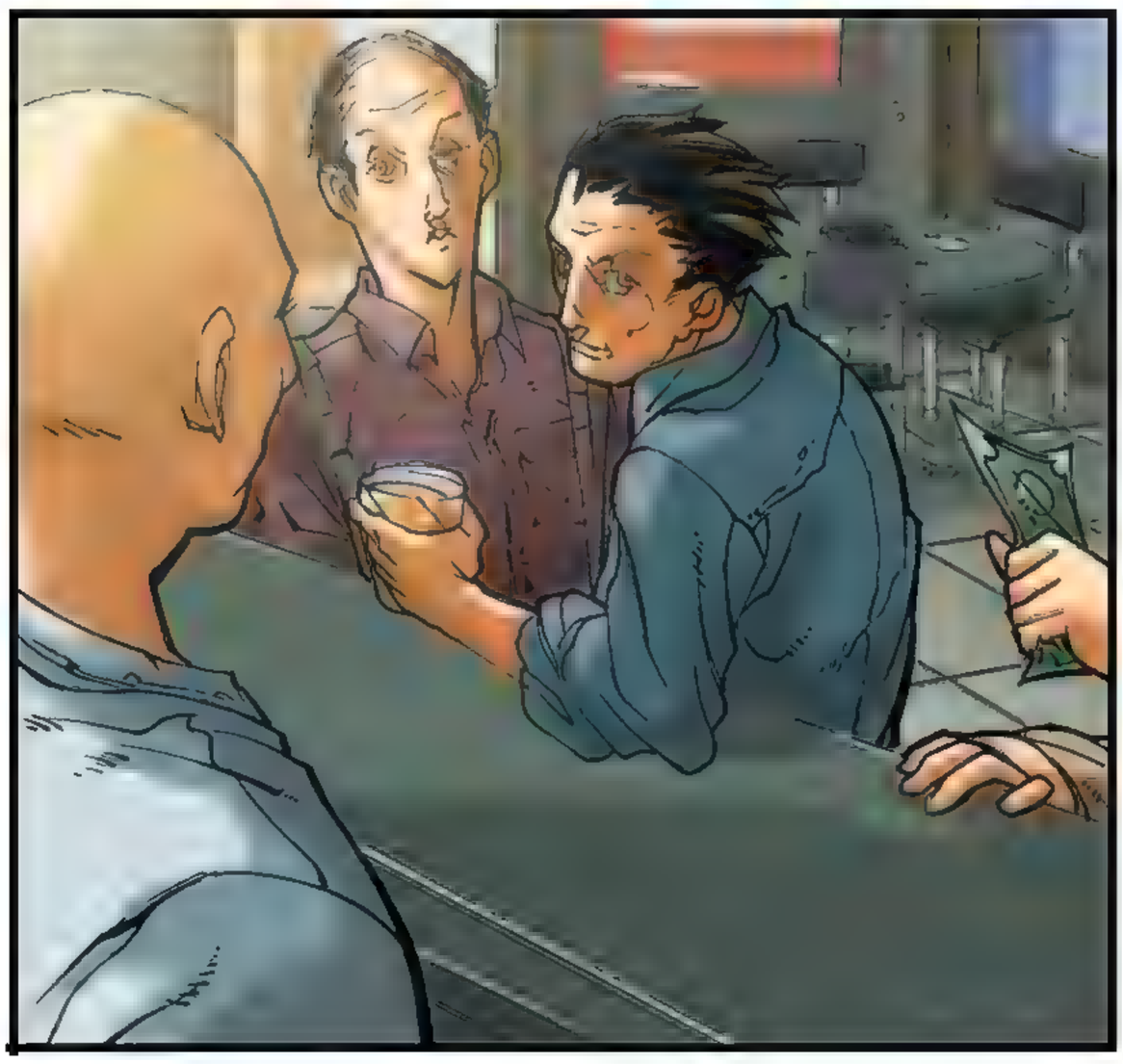
AND THE LADY WENT THAT WAY, IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING.

BAR
OPEN


EXCUSE ME! COULD YOU PUT ON CHANNEL 7-- PLEASE!
WE'RE WATCHING THE YANKEES.


PLEASE! IT'S AN EMERGENCY!
THEY'RE WATCHING THE YANKEES.


A BEER FOR EACH OF THEM, AND YOU KEEP THE CHANGE OUT OF A TWENTY!



SCREW THE YANKEES.
AND STEINBRENNER.
YEAH. WOTTA PUTZ.

EER

BEER

IS THAT SPIDER-MAN?

YEAH.

OH, THAT NUT.

WOTTA PUTZ.

AS YOU CAN SEE FROM THIS VIEW FROM OUR TRAFFIC COPTER, THE BATTLE BETWEEN SPIDER-MAN AND TRACER HAS NOW GONE OUT OVER THE EAST RIVER.

IT IS UNKNOWN WHETHER SPIDER-MAN HAS MANAGED TO DEACTIVATE THE BOMB BENEATH THE FLYING WING...

AND SPIDER-MAN APPEARS NOW TO HAVE DISARMED TRACER.

YES...HE HAS THE WEAPONS OUT OF TRACER'S HANDS.

WHAT'S THIS? I THINK I SEE...

OH, JEEZ...NOW WHAT?

IT...APPEARS TO BE...

...IRON MAN. IRON MAN HAS SHOWN UP-- APPARENTLY TO AID SPIDER-MAN IN APPREHENDING TRACER.

OH, THANK GOD.

WAIT! WHAT'S...

HE'S ATTACKING HIM! HARRY, IRON MAN APPEARS TO BE ATTACKING SPIDER-MAN!

THIS IS A BIZARRE TURN OF EVENTS. WE HAVE NO IDEA WHY...

HE'S HIT! SPIDER-MAN IS HIT!

HE APPEARED TO COMPLETELY MISCALCULATE... LEAPT RIGHT INTO ITS PATH...

AND NOW HE'S HAVING TROUBLE HOLDING ON!

C'MON! C'MON!

I'M SORRY, SPIDER-MAN! IT'S...NOT ME! TRACER'S DOING THIS TO MY ARMOR SOMEHOW! CONTROLLING ME!

BREAK FREE! HURRY!

NOT... NOT STRONG ENOUGH...

SINCE WHEN?!

YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME IF I TOLD YOU!

SPIDER-MAN APPEARS TO HAVE HURT HIS HAND, AND IRON MAN IS NOW PRESSING THE ATTACK...

HARRY, WE'RE BEING WARNED OFF BY POLICE HELICOPTERS. WE'RE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO CONTINUE WITH THE PURSUIT AT THIS TIME...

HOW CAN YOU NOT CONTINUE? IT'S JUST SOME POLICE CHOPPERS!

YOU CALL YOURSELVES JOURNALISTS?!?

AT THIS TIME, WE'LL BE RETURNING TO OUR STUDIO...

CAN WE PUT THE YANKEE GAME BACK ON?

WHATEVER.

CAN I BUY YOU A DRINK, PRETTY LADY?

AW JEEZ...

A REALLY LOUSY NIGHT.

WHAT ARE YOU HAVING?

JOHNNY...LOOK...I'M GLAD YOU LIKE MY WORK IN THE PLAY.

I APPRECIATE YOUR PATRONAGE AND EVERYTHING.

BUT MY OBLIGATION TO YOU ENDS WHEN THE CURTAIN GOES DOWN, OKAY? YOU GET THAT, RIGHT?

SURE. BUT...

NO BUTS.

I JUST WANTED TO BUY YOU A *DRINK.*

JOHNNY, GO HOME.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO FREAKIN' RUDE!

HEY!

ALL THE MONEY I'VE BLOWN ON TICKETS FOR YOUR CRUMMY SHOW, AND ON FLOWERS, AND NOW YOU WON'T EVEN LET ME BUY YOU A DRINK!

QUIT IT!

LISTEN, FELLA, THE LADY WANTS YOU TO LET GO OF--

BLAM

I DON'T BELIEVE IT'S WHAT SHE WANTS. NOT REALLY.

BECAUSE IT'S NOT WHAT I WANT.

AND WHAT I WANT RIGHT NOW IS FOR YOU TO KEEP YOUR HANDS WHERE I CAN SEE 'EM, SO IN CASE YOU GOT FIREPOWER BACK THERE, IT STAYS WHERE IT IS.

THAT'S IT. GOOD.

NOW...

...WHAT HAVE YOU GOT ON DRAFT?

TWACK

ARRRHHH!

EEYAARRHHH!

TWACK

YOU--!

TWACK

ACKKK!!!

EIGHT BALL, CORNER POCKET.

ARRHHH!!

TWACK

THAT'S GAME AND MATCH, YOU SICK--

HOLY COW! SPIDER-MAN'S DEAD FOR *SURE* NOW!

NEVER SAW ANYTHING LIKE IT! FREAKIN' THING CAME CRASHING DOWN AND EXPLODED!

MUST'VE GOTTEN THAT BOMB *OFF* IT OR THE WHOLE *PLACE* WOULD HAVE GONE UP--!

BUT WAS SPIDER-MAN *ON* IT?!

PRETTY SURE I SAW HIM ON IT WHEN IT WENT DOWN...

Y'KNOW, THAT *COULD'A* BEEN *IRON MAN.*

YOU GUYS ARE SO HAMMERED YOU CAN'T TELL IRON MAN FROM SPIDER-MAN?

ONE'S MADE O'METAL, THE OTHER'S IN SPANDEX! HOW COULD YOU NOT--?

WHO WAS *ON* IT?!?

MY *BACK* WAS TO IT. I DIDN'T SEE...

WAIT! WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO WITH *THIS* GUY?!

HEY!!

TAXI!

TAXI

SKREEE

ARE YOU NUTS?! I ALMOST KILLED YOU!

THE LADY DESIRES YOUR SERVICES. WE MUST ALWAYS ACCOMMODATE LADIES.

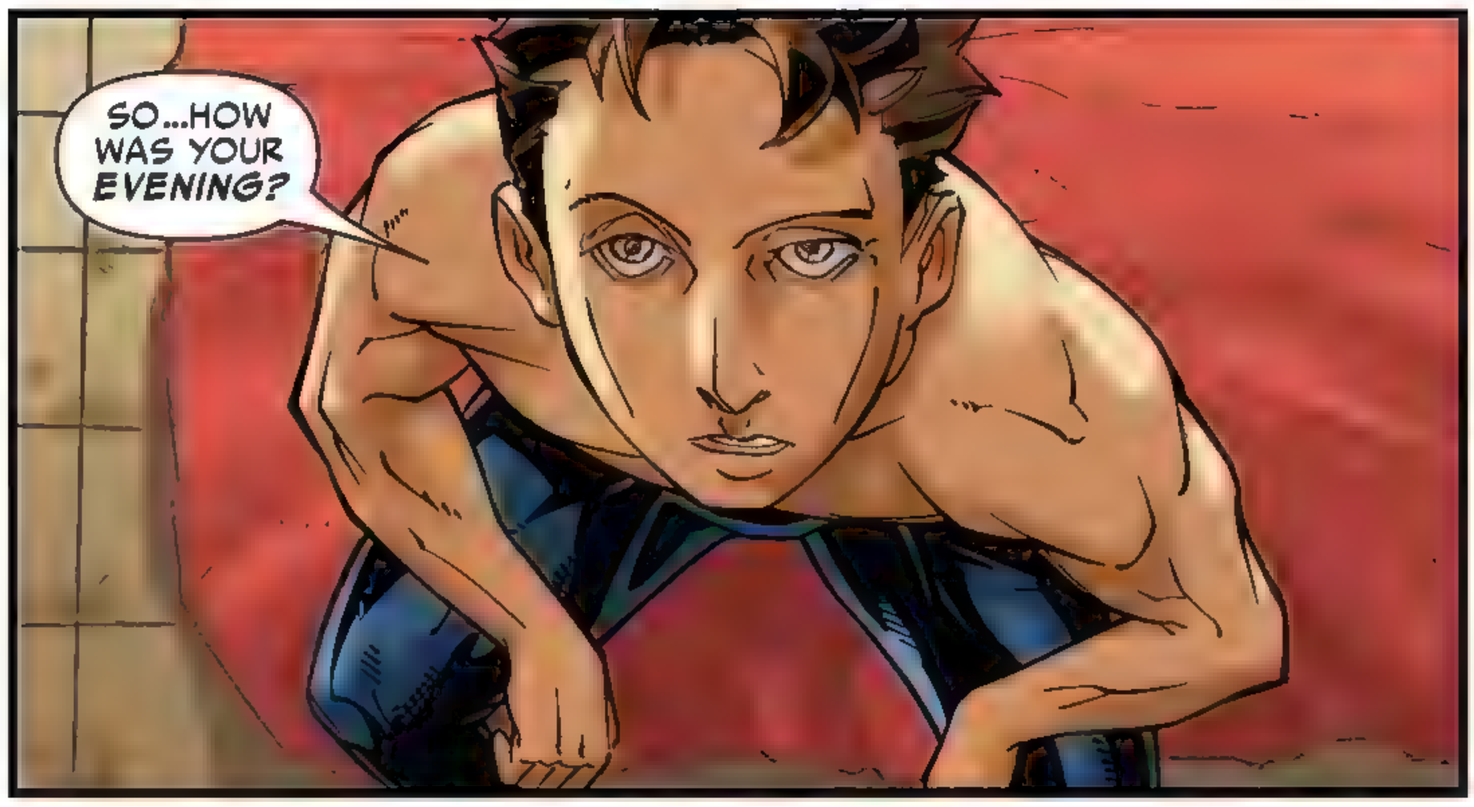
I'M OFF DUTY!

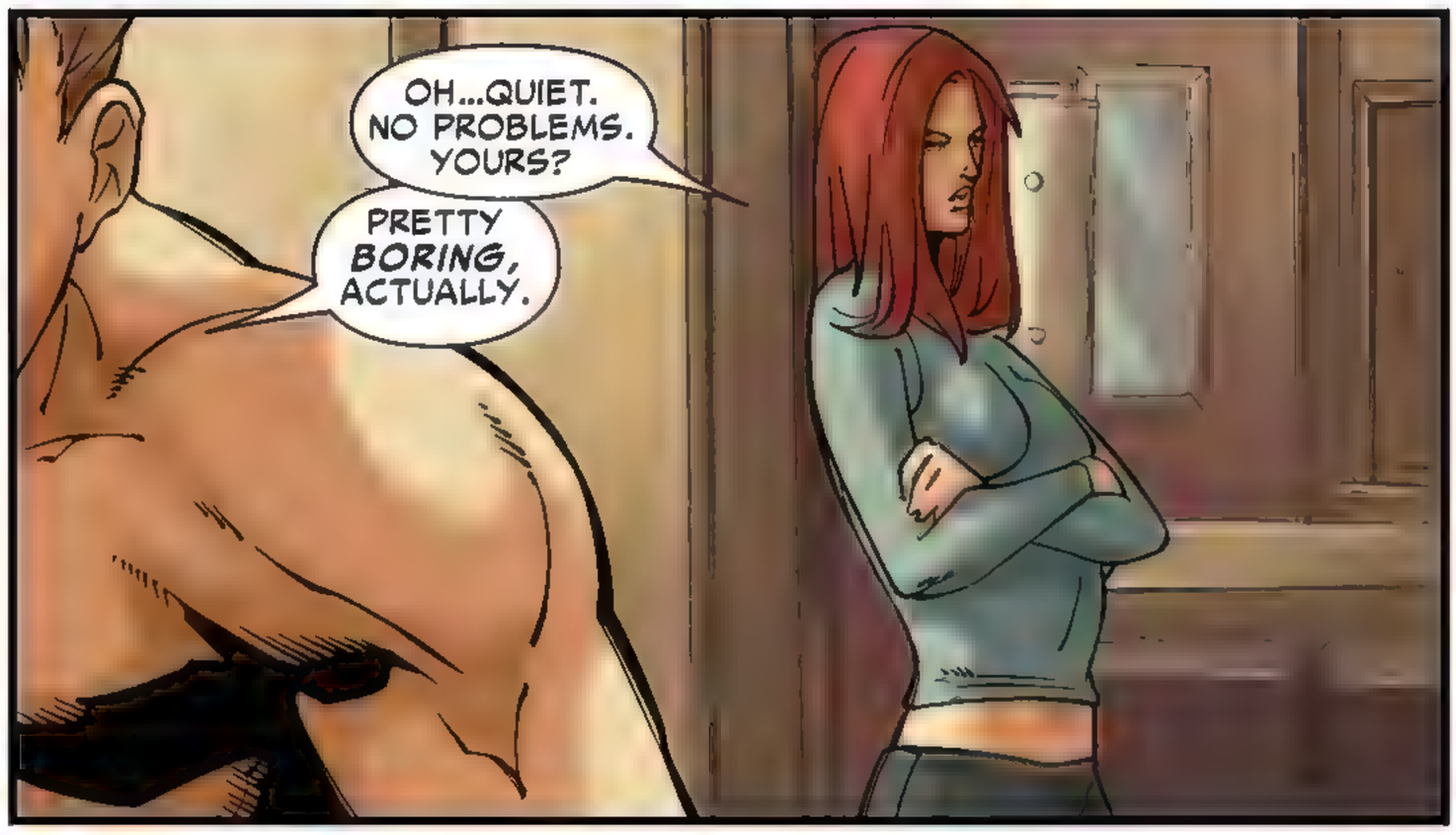
YOU'RE TALKING TO A MAN WHO RETURNED FROM THE DEAD TO KILL SPIDER-MAN. AND I'M TELLING YOU, YOU'RE BACK ON. UNDERSTOOD?

Y-YESSIR.

THANK YOU! YOU'RE A *LIFESAVER!*

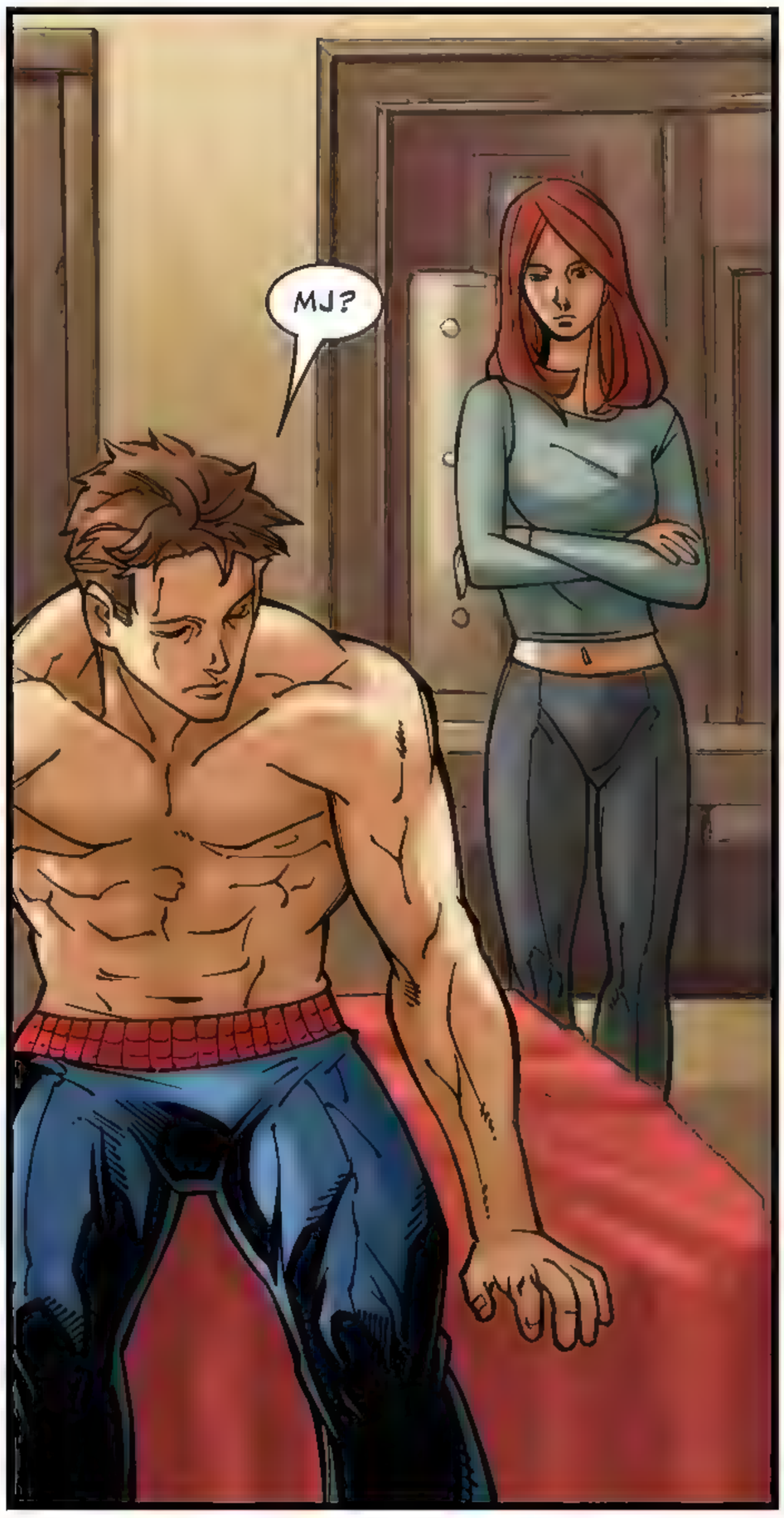
FIRST TIME ANYONE'S EVER CALLED ME *THAT.*


SO...HOW WAS YOUR EVENING?


OH...QUIET. NO PROBLEMS. YOURS?
PRETTY BORING, ACTUALLY.

WHY DON'T I BELIEVE YOU?
PROBABLY THE SAME REASON I DON'T BELIEVE YOU. WE KNOW EACH OTHER TOO WELL.
DO WE?

WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?


MJ?

I THOUGHT...

I THOUGHT IT'D BE DIFFERENT.

WHAT WOULD?

EVER SINCE I FOUND OUT WHO...WHAT... YOU WERE...

IT'S LIKE I'VE BEEN LIVING IN A BOX.

OTHER GIRLS CAN TALK TO THEIR FRIENDS ABOUT THEIR *LOVERS*...THEIR *HUSBANDS*...

GET OUTSIDE OPINIONS...TO HELP WORK *THROUGH* STUFF.

NOT ME. NOOOO. BECAUSE IT'S A BIG SECRET.

LIKE LOVING AN *ALCOHOLIC*. OR A *WIFE-BEATER*.

EXCEPT THERE'S ORGANIZATIONS TO HELP WITH THOSE. AND I HAD NO ONE.

LOOK, I... ADMIT IT LOOKED BAD. BUT...THERE WERE REASONS...

AND THEN WE CAME HERE. AND I THOUGHT, "THANK GOD... FINALLY...

"PEOPLE TO TALK TO. TO HELP ME, Y'KNOW...'GET IT.'"

EXCEPT IT TURNS OUT...*NOT* SO MUCH.

BEFORE I FORGET... TONY'S OKAY?

SO YOU KNOW.

TRACER TOOK OVER HIS ARMOR SOMEHOW. TONY MANAGED TO OVERRIDE IT JUST IN TIME...HE'S BUILDING SAFE-GUARDS SO...

YOU WERE *SO SLOPPY* OUT THERE...LIKE YOU DIDN'T CARE ANYMORE. YOU COULD'VE DIED. EXCEPT...I THINK YOU'VE *WANTED* TO DIE FOR YEARS.

I KNOW THE REASONS. YOUR REASONS.

I FINALLY FIGURED IT OUT.

IT'S SURVIVOR GUILT.

IT'S NOT JUST THAT YOU LET THE BURGLAR GO, AND THEN HE KILLED YOUR UNCLE BEN.

IT'S THAT THE GOOD, CARING MAN HE WAS DIED... WHILE THE SELFISH, UNCARING MAN YOU WERE...LIVED.

YOU USED TO TELL ME IN THE OLD DAYS, YOU'D "ALWAYS RUN OUT OF WEB FLUID AT THE WORST POSSIBLE MOMENT."

AND I WONDERED, WHY NOT BUILD IN AN INDICATOR GAUGE THE VERY FIRST TIME THAT HAPPENED, TO WARN YOU?

WHY RISK RUNNING OUT EVER AGAIN?

I THINK, DEEP DOWN...YOU REALLY WANT TO BE WITH HIM. BUT YOU CAN'T ADMIT THAT.

SO YOU'LL JUST KEEP PRESSING YOUR LUCK, TAKING BIGGER CHANCES...

...PUSHING YOURSELF MORE, GETTING SLOPPIER.

YOU WANT TO BE WITH YOUR DEAD UNCLE...

...MORE THAN YOU DO YOUR LIVE WIFE.

BECAUSE, DEEP DOWN...YOU THINK YOU DON'T DESERVE HAPPINESS...

...OR LIFE...OR LOVE...

...OR ME.

YOU WANT TO DIE.

AND I... DON'T KNOW... HOW TO LIVE WITH THAT.

YOU'RE WRONG.
I'M NOT.
YOU ARE. I DON'T WANT TO DIE.
HOW DO YOU *KNOW?* HOW DO I KNOW?
BECAUSE I READ THIS.
AND I DIDN'T WANT TO BELIEVE IT.
CASE # 92356
PATIENT NAME: Spider-Man (Peter)
DOCTOR NAME: A. Castillo
After much analysis of case # 92356, it is clear that the patient's condition has
I DIDN'T WANT TO...AND I'M...
I'M SO SCARED, MJ, I'VE NEVER *BEEN* SO...
...SO...
CASE # 92356
PATIENT NAME: Spider-Man (Peter)
DOCTOR NAME: A. Castillo
CONTINUED IN AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #525...

SPIDER-MAN

THE OTHER: EVOLVE OR DIE

NEXT WEEK, IN AMAZING SPIDER-MAN#525, SPIDER-MAN TRACKS DOWN THE TRACER!

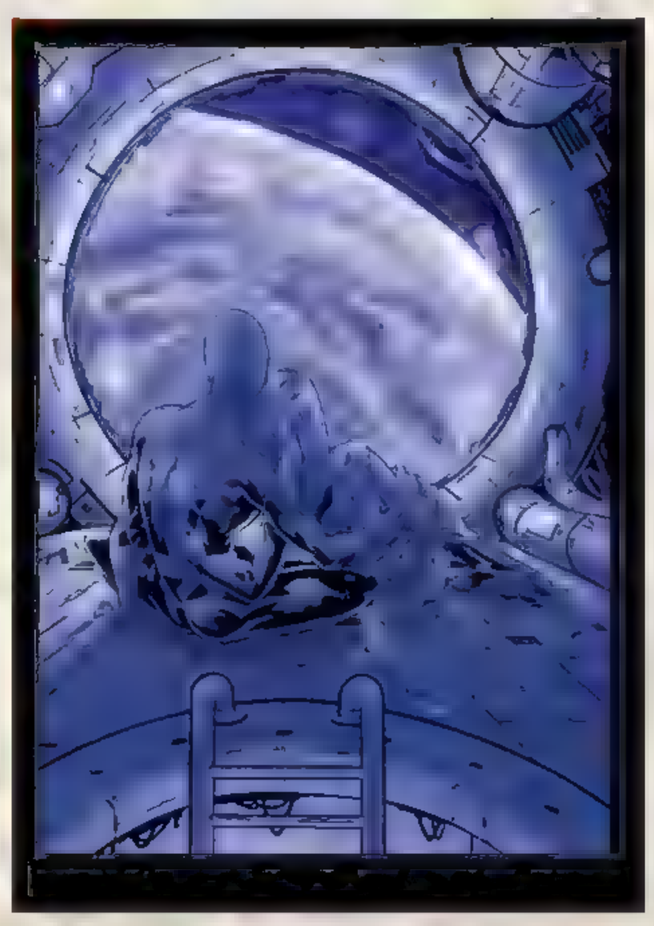
Peter David returns with Mike Deodato for THE OTHER part 3.

IN THREE WEEKS, IN FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-MAN#2, SPIDER-MAN TOURS THE MARVEL U FOR A CURE. GUEST STARS ABOUND!

Reginald Hudlin teams up with Mike Wieringo for THE OTHER part 4.

AND RETURN HERE IN A MONTH FOR MARVEL KNIGHTS SPIDER-MAN#20, WHEN SPIDER-MAN'S QUEST TAKES HIM FROM QUEENS TO LATVERIA TO THE MOON.

Reggie and Pat Lee combine forces for THE OTHER part 5.



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THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

THE

ULTIMATUM

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 3 OF 12

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THE 4TH

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 3 OF 12

PREVIOUSLY IN

MARVEL KNIGHTS SPIDER-MAN #19

The diagnosis is in -- and it's bad news for Peter Parker.

There were warning signs: In recent weeks, Spider-Man has been weaker and slower than usual, his powers even completely failing him at key moments. And when a new super-villain calling himself The Tracer arrives to cause mayhem, Spider-Man is nearly killed in his attempt to capture him.

Spider-Man's battle wounds bring him to Doctor Castillo, who discovers that there is, in fact, something terribly wrong with him—something that modern medicine can't even begin to comprehend, let alone cure.

All indications point to one thing: Peter's condition is terminal.

After Peter shares the terrifying news with his wife, Mary Jane, the couple begins to search for answers, unaware that the mysterious Morlun – an arch-nemesis from Spider-Man's past – has returned from the grave.

"RAGE"

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I'M SORRY, BUT...IT'S HOPELESS. SHE'S DYING. SHE'D BE DEAD ALREADY IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE RESPIRATORS. THERE'S JUST...NO HOPE.

OH, MAY... MAY, I'M SO SORRY...

SPIDER-MAN: THE OTHER--EVOLVE OR DIE PART THREE

RAGE

MAY, I'M SO SORRY THAT YOU HAVE TO BE THE ONE WHO--

IT'S...IT'S ALL RIGHT, BEN. MOM AND I DISCUSSED THIS... AGES AGO...

SHE TOLD ME, IF THE TIME EVER CAME...SHE DIDN'T WANT TO LIVE LIKE THIS, TO...

DO I...HAVE TO SIGN SOMETHING? OR DO I JUST SAY TO...TO...

THESE RELEASES, RIGHT HERE.

YOU...DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS, MAY...

SOMETIMES, BEN...LIFE IS ABOUT FACING THE THINGS WE DON'T WANT TO FACE. BESIDES...

SHE WAS NEVER AFRAID OF DEATH. AND I'M NOT EITHER.

IN FACT...WHEN THE TIME COMES, YOU PROMISE YOU'LL DO THE SAME FOR ME.

I'M SERIOUS!

MAY, YOU'LL PROBABLY OUTLIVE ME BY--

ALL RIGHT! *ALL RIGHT!* I PROMISE.

THANK YOU, BEN.

ALL RIGHT, DOCTOR. LET HER GO.

IS...IS SHE...?

I THINK SO...

NOT AFRAID OF DEATH? NOT AFRAID!?

NGGHHHHH!

YOU KNOW NOTHING OF DEATH! NOTHING!

EVIL CHILD! HOW DARE YOU KILL YOUR MOTHER!

I GAVE YOU YOUR LIFE, AND YOU TAKE MINE FROM ME WITHOUT A WHIMPER!

YOU DON'T GIVE IN TO DEATH! YOU GET ANGRY AND YOU FIGHT!

FIGHT! FIGHT!

AHHHHH!!!

HUNNHHH!
HUNHHH!!

EH?

OH, MY...MY LORD!

Ben...do you see this?

It looks like the city's under siege.

Peter's out in this. I just...I'm certain of it.

I swear, Ben, I don't know whether to be relieved because I know he's out there helping people...

...or terrified because he's risking his life.

In your name, Ben. He's doing it all in your name.

Out of guilt, because he feels responsible over what happened to you.

It's bad enough you've never truly let *ME* go, Ben.

Can't you at least let our *NEPHEW* have his freedom?

HOW COULD YOU JUST LET ME SLEEP THROUGH THIS, MJ?

THE *OTHER* AVENGERS COULD HANDLE IT! YOU WERE SLEEPING SO DEEPLY...

YOU DON'T GET TO MAKE THAT CALL!

I'M YOUR *WIFE*, PETER! IF NOT ME, THEN WH--?

OOOOFFF!

AUNT MAY! FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, WHAT'RE YOU DOING UP THIS TIME OF NIGHT?

WELL...HOW'S A BODY TO SLEEP? WHAT'S... WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE?

IT'S NOTHING YOU NEED TO CONCERN YOURSELF ABOUT. GO BACK TO SLEEP.

I'M NOT A *CHILD*, PETER. WHAT'S--

I SAID GO BACK TO SLEEP!

...

WHAT'S WRONG?

YOU SAW! THE CITY IS--

NOT OUT THERE, PETER. HERE. WITH YOU. WHAT ARE YOU HIDING?

NOTHING. I'M NOT HIDING ANYTHING.

WILL YOU JUST, FOR ONCE, TRUST ME AND GO BACK TO SLEEP?

Trust him?

Amazing how he can say that without a hint of irony.

He lied to me for so long, about so many things...and now...

...now I'm supposed to trust him. Like issuing a presidential pardon, all past sins forgiven.

The truly crazy thing is... I do trust him.

Perhaps I'm the one with no sense of irony.

Odd, though...that Peter can move so quickly, dodge bullets and such...

...but he didn't react fast enough to avoid running into me.

And I'm considerably slower than a speeding bullet.

Kitchen's empty. I suppose even Jarvis needs to sleep some time...although he'd doubtless be loathe to admit it.

That reminds me... Ben, I need to talk to you about Jarvis.

HE'S A GOOD MAN, JARVIS IS. A DECENT MAN. IN SOME RESPECTS...HEROIC.

I...I LIKE HIM, BEN.

I LIKE HIM VERY MUCH.

AND IT'S BEEN SO LONG. I MEAN, THERE'S BEEN NO ONE SINCE YOU. NO ONE...

UNLESS YOU'RE GOING TO COUNT OTTO OCTAVIUS. I'LL ADMIT, THAT FALLS SQUARELY INTO THE "WHAT-WAS-I-THINKING" CATEGORY.

I HOPE YOU'RE NOT GOING TO HOLD THAT AGAINST ME.

BUT JARVIS IS... HE'S...

HE'S WHAT?

LAND'S SAKES! YOU STARTLED ME!

SORRY, MA'AM. DIDN'T MEAN TO.

WHO ARE YOU?

NAME'S TOMMY, MA'AM.

I'M A RESERVE AVENGER.

A... "RESERVE"...?

YES, MA'AM. ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS, WHEN THINGS ARE GOING HAYWIRE AND ALL THE AVENGERS ARE OUT TRYING TO GET MATTERS UNDER CONTROL...

...THEY'LL CALL IN A ***RESERVIST*** LIKE ME TO KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS, HOME-BASEWISE.

WELL, THAT'S...THAT'S VERY WISE.

SO HOW ARE THINGS "GOING HAYWIRE," IF I MAY ASK?

THE MACHINES, MA'AM. A NUMBER OF THEM ARE RISING UP IN REVOLT.

CARS. COMPUTERS. ANYTHING WITH A DATA CHIP.

WHAT IS A MICROPROCESSOR, ANYWAY, BUT A SORT OF BRAIN? HAD TO HAPPEN, SOONER OR LATER.

MACHINES ARE TARGETING EVERYBODY.

ESTIMATED [redacted] BULBS

WEIGHT 115 POUNDS

POWERS UNKNOWN, BUT UNLIKELY

CHANCES OF ESCAPE 0.00%

NO ONE'S SAFE.

OOOOOOFFF!

THEY SAY ANY LANDING YOU CAN WALK AWAY FROM IS A GOOD ONE.

BUT I THINK YOU MAY HAVE JUST PROVEN YOURSELF THE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE.

WHA--?

UNFFF!!

MORLUN--?! BUT YOU'RE... YOU'RE DEAD!

ONE OF US IS.

I COULD KILL YOU NOW, OF COURSE. BUT YOUR... DETERIORATION...IS OF INTEREST TO ME.

PERSONAL REASONS. I'M *SURE* YOU UNDERSTAND.

SO WE'LL MAKE IT LATER, THEN.

LIKE HELL! IT'LL BE *NOW!*

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR...

...PARTICULARLY WHEN YOU DON'T *TRULY* WANT IT.

GET BACK HERE! WHAT, I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO FIGHT?

YOU DON'T GET TO INSULT ME AND JUST JUMP AWAY!

OOOOFFF!!!

SLICK. BET *THAT* DISMOUNT IMPRESSED THE ROMANIAN JUDGES.

LOGAN! WHAT'RE *YOU* DOING HERE?!

CAP SENT ME AFTER YOU AFTER THAT KILLER ROBOT SENT YOU FLYING. MAKE SURE YOU'RE OKAY.

SINCE WHEN DO *YOU* CARE IF I'M OKAY OR NOT?

YOU DON'T REALLY GET THE WHOLE "TEAM" THING, DO YOU?

I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS. I HAVE TO GET AFTER *MORLUN.*

WHO?

YOU *MUST'VE* SEEN HIM. THE SPOOKY GUY WITH THE--

KID, WE'RE *ALONE* HERE. I GUARANTEE IT.

WHAT'S THE *MATTER,* GROUCHO? DON'T WANT TO BELONG TO ANY CLUB THAT'D HAVE *YOU* AS A MEMBER?

AW, GOD...SO I'M HALLUCINATING NOW?

COULDN'T SAY. BUT WHATEVER YOU ARE DOIN', DO IT BACK AT THE TOWERS.

BUT...YOU GUYS NEED ME...

WE NEED YOU TO LIVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY.

YEAH. MUSTN'T LOSE SIGHT OF THAT.

SO *TELL* ME ABOUT YOURSELF, TOMMY. WHAT CAN YOU... "DO," I SUPPOSE, IS THE BEST WAY TO PUT IT.

IF I TELL YOU...YOU HAVE TO PROMISE NOT TO LAUGH.

I DON'T LAUGH AT HEROES, TOMMY. AND I CERTAINLY DON'T LAUGH AT PEOPLE I'M MAKING PEANUT BUTTER SANDWICHES FOR.

OKAY, WELL...HERE'S THE THING. YOU KNOW HOW THOR IS A GOD?

I KNOW THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY, YES.

WELL, I'M A GOD, TOO. A REALLY NEW ONE.

I SEE.

YOU DOUBT ME.

I'M... SKEPTICAL. MAY I ASK WHO YOUR WORSHIPPERS ARE?

MACHINES, MA'AM. EVERY PASSING DAY THEY'RE GETTING SMARTER AND SMARTER.

AND THEY CREATED *ME* TO WORSHIP, JUST AS HUMANS CREATED *THEIR* GOD, OR GODS.

GOD CREATED PEOPLE, TOMMY. *NOT* THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

AND IF YOU'RE A "MACHINE GOD," SHOULDN'T YOU BE OUT IN THE CITY, QUELLING YOUR "FOLLOWERS"?

I SHOULD. BUT CAPTAIN AMERICA WANTS ME HERE AS A "LAST RESORT." AND YA DON'T ARGUE WITH CAP.

COULD YOU CUT THE CRUST, PLEASE?

ANYWAY, THE LONGER I OPERATE, THE MORE MACHINES WORSHIP ME, AND THE STRONGER I BECOME.

THEY ASK ME WHAT I WANT, I TELL THEM, THEY PRAY TO ME, MAKE OFFERINGS TO ME...IT'S ALL GOOD.

TOMMY...I THINK YOU'RE HAVING FUN WITH AN OLD WOMAN.

YOU THINK I'M NOT A GOD?

WELL, LET'S JUST SAY YOU DON'T SEEM OMNISCIENT TO ME.

REALLY. HUNH.

SO...WHAT WAS IT LIKE SHUTTING OFF MUMMY'S LIFE SUPPORT?

THE MACHINE TOLD ME IT WAS PRETTY ROUGH ON YOU.

KIDDING. I HEARD YOU SHOUTING STUFF AS I WALKED PAST YOUR ROOM. FIGURED IT OUT.

BUT SERIOUSLY...IF YOU NEED TO TALK ABOUT IT...I WANT TO HELP.

YOU KNOW HOW SOMETIMES... YOU DO THE RIGHT THING? AND YOU KNOW IT'S THE RIGHT THING? BUT YOU STILL FEEL...

...DIRTY?

THAT'S HOW IT WAS.

SOMETIMES, I...DREAM ABOUT IT. IN MY DREAM...SHE'S ATTACKING ME. FIGHTING BACK.

IN REALITY... SHE SIMPLY PASSED. QUIETLY. PEACEFULLY.

AND I PATTED MYSELF ON THE BACK FOR MY BRAVERY...IN THE FACE OF DEATH.

BUT YOU WEREN'T REALLY BRAVE, WERE YOU?

NO. I JUST PUT ON A GOOD SHOW.

PUT ON A MASK, JUST LIKE MY ***NEPHEW*** LATER WOULD. THE MASK HELPS HIDE THE FEAR.

BUT HE'S ***AFRAID***. I CAN TELL. MORE SO THAN USUAL, LATELY. SOMETHING IS...

...WRONG... WITH HIM. AND HE WON'T...

HE TRIES TO PROTECT ME, YOU SEE, BUT...

I'M SORRY. WE HARDLY KNOW EACH OTHER. I SHOULDN'T BE TELLING YOU THIS...

NO, HEY... IT'S ALL RIGHT. WE'RE ALL FRIENDS HERE.

IF YOU WERE MY AUNT, ***I'D*** BE TRYING TO PROTECT YOU.

WHO ***IS*** YOUR NEPHEW, BY THE W--?

TRAGER!!!

GET AWAY FROM HER!

OOOOFFF!!!

BET I DON'T GET ANY BROWNIES NOW.

BUT HEY... NOW I GET TO KILL YOU. THAT *IS* WHAT I CAME HERE FOR, BY THE WAY.

THE MACHINES TOLD ME YOU WERE HANGING WITH THE AVENGERS NOW. SO I FIGURED I'D GIVE MY FOLLOWERS A GOOD NIGHT OF SMACKING YOU AROUND...

...BEFORE FINISHING THE JOB.

SPIDER-MAN! HE SAYS HE'S SOME SORT OF...OF MACHINE GOD!

A GOD WOULDN'T WASTE HIS TIME ROBBING BANKS!

HE WOULD IF HE WERE FAIRLY NEW. TESTING HIS POWERS. AND JUST, Y'KNOW, LOOKING FOR STUFF TO DO.

SO LEMME GUESS: *YOU'RE* THE LUCKY NEPHEW.

SWEET LADY. I *WAS* GOING TO KILL HER BUT...HEY...SHE OFFERED TO MAKE ME A SANDWICH AND, WELL, I *WAS* HUNGRY...

KILL...?

IT'S YOU, ISN'T IT? THE ONE ACTUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR...

THE CARS OUT OF CONTROL... THE COMPUTER GRIDS CRASHING...THE GIANT FREAKIN' ROBOT... ALL HIM!

BUT...BUT WHY?

FOR THE SAME REASON *ANY* GOD DOES:

BECAUSE I *CAN.*

HERE'S WHERE YOU FIND OUT YOU CAN'T!

YOU KNOW, I'M SO GLAD YOU WERE THE FIRST HERO I RAN INTO!

THE OTHERS ARE SO DULL NEXT TO YOU.

STILL, FIRST THINGS FIRST. YOUR AUNT'S WORRIED.

LET'S FIND OUT WHY.

ARRHHHH!

DNA SAMPLES, SKIN SAMPLES, TISSUE, BLOOD...INSTANT ANALYSIS OF--

EH?

ARE YOU KIDDING ME?

ARE YOU KIDDING ME?!?

SOMEONE IN *YOUR* CONDITION IS FIGHTING *ME?*

HOW DO YOU THINK THAT MAKES *ME* FEEL?

I'LL TELL YOU: ANGRY, IS HOW IT MAKES ME FEEL! EVERYONE ELSE GETS SPIDER-MAN IN HIS PRIME, AND I GET... THIS?

WHAT THE BLAZES IS GOING *ON* AROUND HERE?! YOU'RE THE *SECOND* PERSON TONIGHT TO TELL ME I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO TRY AND KILL!

PRESUMING THE FIRST WASN'T A HALLUCINATION, THAT IS.

IT'S NOT THAT YOU'RE NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

IT'S JUST THAT... WELL...

I HAVE MY PRIDE.

THWAP!

THWAP!

I AM SO SICK OF YOU PEOPLE!

ALL MY LIFE, ALL I'VE EVER TRIED TO BE IS DECENT! TO MAKE LIVES BETTER!
ALL TO MAKE UP FOR ONE HUGE MISTAKE!
WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT?
IT'S BEEN *LONG ENOUGH!*
LET'S GO FOR A *SECOND* HUGE MISTAKE!
HOW ABOUT MURDER? *THAT* ONE WORKS FOR ME!
DOES THAT WORK FOR *YOU?*
GKKHHH...
SORRY, DIDN'T *CATCH* THAT.
I MEAN, YEAH, SURE...THIS *IS* AGAINST THE LAW! I COULD GO TO *JAIL* FOR THIS!
BUT THERE'S THE TRIAL FIRST, RIGHT? PROBABLY TAKE A COUPLE YEARS!
SO I'M NOT, Y'KNOW... ALL THAT *WORRIED* ABOUT IT!
IT'S *LIBERATING!* AFTER YEARS OF FEELING LIKE I'M CARRYING THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD...
...NOW I CAN SIMPLY NOT GIVE A *DAMN* ANYMORE!

STOP IT! STOP IT! THIS ISN'T YOU!

YEAH... IT IS HIM, LADY.

SCRATCH A *HUMAN*...GET AN ANIMAL.

NOW ME...I'M NOT ANIMAL ENOUGH TO KICK A MAN WHEN HE'S DOWN. EVEN A SPIDER-MAN.

SO I'M GOING TO REIN IN MY WORSHIPPERS... STEP OFF THE ROAD TO DIVINITY FOR A WHILE. THINK OF IT AS A GESTURE OF RESPECT...

...FOR THE DEEEEAAAA...

DON'T MOVE!

I HEARD THE RUCKUS, AND SUMMONED THE *AVENGERS!* THEY'RE ON THEIR--

--WAY?

OHHHHH DEAR.

I'M GOING TO HAVE TO CLEAN THIS UP, AREN'T I?

AH WELL. AT LEAST I'M NOT REQUIRED TO WEAR SPANDEX.

COME ON, PETER... LET'S GET YOU TO--

JUST A MINUTE, MARY JANE. I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING YOUR HUSBAND NEEDS TO TELL ME.

IT'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO FACE TONI--

PETER... SOMETIMES LIFE IS FACING WHAT YOU DON'T *WANT* TO FACE.

DON'T WORRY. I CAN BE BRAVE.

YEAH. WELL...

THAT MAKES ONE OF US.

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REGINALD HUDLIN • MIKE WIERINGO

Friendly Neighborhood SPIDER-MAN®

THE

THE

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 4 OF 12

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THE OTHER

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 4 OF 12

PREVIOUSLY IN

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #526

For the first time in a long while, life has been going pretty well for Peter Parker. He's got a cool new pad in Avengers Tower, a beautiful wife and loving aunt, and he just happens to be the coolest swinger in town--that wall-crawling webbed wonder known as Spider-Man!

But all good things must come to an end. Peter's dreams are haunted by terrible visions of death. A new villain named Tracer comes on the scene, injuring Spider-Man and forcing him to go a doctor who specializes in treating super heroes. His blood is checked, and the doctor finds something so alarming that she cannot discuss it with Peter over the phone. Now both Peter's wife Mary Jane and his Aunt May have found out the truth--Spider-Man's body is shutting down.

Meanwhile, the mysterious Morlun--a parasitic hunter thought to have perished in a previous attempt to kill Peter and consume his life force--suddenly reappears to spy on the hero and his loved ones...and to wait for the opportune moment to strike!

"BARGAINING"

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HAVE YOU...

HAVE YOU GOTTEN A SECOND OPINION YET?

UH, NO... THINGS HAVE BEEN KIND OF BUSY...

"KIND OF BUSY"! THIS IS A *DEATH SENTENCE*, PETER! AND YOU HAVEN'T EVEN *CHECKED* TO SEE IF IT'S REALLY *TRUE?*

WHERE AM I SUPPOSED TO *GO?* I CAN'T JUST WALTZ INTO SOME HMO AND ASK FOR THE SPECIAL POWERS PLAN....

HOW ABOUT DOWN THE HALL TO ALL YOUR *SUPER-SMART SUPER-FRIENDS?!!!*

AUNT MAY, I CAN HANDLE THIS...

NO YOU *CAN'T.* YOU'RE TOO PROUD TO ASK YOUR FRIENDS FOR HELP. THEY'LL JUST YELL *"AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!"* ONE DAY AND YOU WON'T SHOW UP BECAUSE YOU'RE LAID OUT ON A SLAB.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN STARK'S OFFICE?

I DUNNO. THAT REDHEAD CHICK AND THAT OLD LADY--PETER'S MOM, I THINK--STORMED IN THERE AN HOUR AGO. CAN'T BE GOOD.

OH MAN! SO MAYBE THERE'S SOME TRUTH TO THE HEADLINES ABOUT THE MILLIONAIRE PLAYBOY AND THE SUPERMODEL?

I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S THE SITUATION HERE.

LADY, I DO SECURITY. GUYS LIKE STARK--THEY ALWAYS HAVE A WEAK SPOT. A WILD SIDE. THAT'S WHY HE'S GOT HIMSELF SEALED UP IN A TIN CAN.

TIME

DON'T WORRY, I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT. NOTHING BUT THE BEST.

IF YOU COULD JUST KEEP THIS QUIET.

OF COURSE. THAT WOULD BE BEST FOR EVERYBODY.

UH...

SO, MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT.

SOME TIME LATER...

SO...

...WHAT KIND OF RESULTS ARE *YOU* GETTING, REED?

THERE'S CELLULAR DEGENERATION, BUT IT'S NOT CANCER OR ANYTHING TRADITIONAL, YELLOWJACKET.

I DON'T GET IT, EITHER. I FEEL LIKE IT'S TIED TO THE RADIATION-BASED INFECTION THAT GAVE HIM HIS POWERS, BUT I'M NOT AN EXPERT IN THAT FIELD.

THIS IS A VERY SMART ROOM. BUT WHEN IT COMES TO RADIATION-BASED MUTATION, THERE'S ONLY *ONE* TRUE EXPERT.

HOLD ON, DOCTOR FOSTER. YOU'RE NOT SAYING WHAT I *THINK* YOU'RE SAYING...

ONE HOUR LATER...

LOCK

MAYBE IT'S JUST THE NEW YORKER IN ME...

...BUT THE DESERT GIVES ME THE CREEPS.

WE'RE GETTING A HEALTHY SIGNAL SAYING HE'S IN THE AREA.

CAN THAT THING DISTINGUISH WHETHER HE'S NORMAL OR HULKED OUT?

YIKES!

WHOOSH!

YOU TELL ME.

IS IT TOO LATE TO CALL IN THE REST OF THE TEAM?

YOU WERE THE ONE WHO WANTED TO KEEP THINGS "PRIVATE," REMEMBER?

CALM DOWN, GUYS, WE CAN REASON WITH HIM.

LEAVE HULK ALONE!!!

OH YEAH. I'M FEELING RATIONALITY JUST OOZING FROM HIS PORES.

THE KEY IS **NOT** TO ENGAGE HIM IN A BATTLE. BECAUSE THE ANGRIER HULK GETS--

--THE MORE LIKELY HE IS TO KILL US ALL DEAD.

EVERYONE GOT THEIR AIR MASKS ON SECURELY?

YEP.

YEP.

GOOD. BECAUSE WE'RE PUMPING ENOUGH **TRANQUILIZER GAS** INTO THE OPEN AIR TO TAKE OUT GALACTUS. IF GALACTUS BREATHES, WHICH WE'RE NOT SURE ABOUT. BUT IT SHOULD WORK ON THE HULK.

BRUCE...WE REALLY NEED YOUR HELP. WE'RE PLEADING WITH YOU...

BRUCE NOT HERE! CALL HULK HIS NAME AGAIN AND HULK SMASH!!!!

YOU'RE GETTING IN ARM'S REACH. I WOULDN'T DO THAT.

RELAX, BRUCE. YOU'RE WITH **FRIENDS.** WE NEED YOUR **HELP.** JUST WATCH THE LIGHTS.

LIGHTS... PRETTY...

YES, VERY PRETTY... WATCH THE PATTERN...

YOU TRICKING HULK!?

THIS IS STUPID. I SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT MY WIFE.

C'MON, REED. ONE NIGHT OUT WITH THE BOYS CAN'T HURT. BESIDES, I'D SAY THE THING WOULD BE MY CHOICE OF--

SUE WOULD CUT OFF HIS AIR WITH A ***FORCE FIELD.*** HIS LUNGS WOULD FILL WITH GAS AND THIS WOULD BE OVER. NOW WE'VE GOT TO DO THIS THE HARD WAY.

G-G-GOTTA MAKE THIS QUICK...

STOP STINGING!

ZZAAAAP

INCOMING!

OW!

WHAM

OKAY, REEEEEEALLLY BIG ROCK COMING OUR WAY.

KEEP AWAY

NOT GOOD. I WONDER IF THAT GAS HAS DISSIPATED--

REED? REED?

HOWDY! REMEMBER ME?

VAGUELY...

"VAGUELY"! GOOD WORD CHOICE. LOOKS LIKE THE GAS IS DOING ITS JOB.

YOU TALK TOO MUCH, BUG MAN.

YEAH, IT'S A BAD HABIT. BUT IT SERVES A PURPOSE. LET ME TELL YOU THIS JOKE.

KNOCK KNOCK.

GGGRRRRR!

I'LL TAKE THAT AS A "WHO'S THERE?"

HEH...

...HEH...

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...A KNOCK-KNOCK JOKE...

I GOT A MILLION OF 'EM. GOTCHA!

LATER. THE BAXTER BUILDING.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

THAT YOU'RE STANDING A LITTLE CLOSE.

SORRY.

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU LET BANNER INTO OUR HOME. BIG MISTAKE, REED. AND HE *AIN'T* KEEPING MY SHIRT.

STOP POUTING, BEN. WHAT WAS I *SUPPOSED* TO DO? HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY EQUIPMENT ON HAND.

YOU KNOW WHY THAT IS, SMARTY PANTS? 'CAUSE HE'S *THE HULK*, AND THE HULK LIKES TO *SMASH* STUFF. YOU WANNA TALK ABOUT A BULL IN A CHINA SHOP? HE'S RIGHT THERE. AND THE HULK AIN'T COVERED ON OUR HOME-OWNERS POLICY, I'LL TELL YOU THAT.

THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE, DOC, DOESN'T SCREAM "CURE."

I'M SORRY, BUT I'M GOING TO NEED SOME MORE TIME. UNFORTUNATELY, AT THE RATE IT'S SPREADING...

I GUESS THAT'S IT. I MEAN, YOU'RE THE *GURU* OF RADIATION. IF *YOU* CAN'T HELP ME, NO ONE CAN.

THAT MIGHT NOT BE THE CASE. I HAVE A *SUGGESTION.*

I'M ALL EARS.

THREE HOURS LATER.
WAKANDA, AFRICA.

HELLO, MY FRIEND.

THANKS FOR SEEING ME ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE.

THE LEAST THAT I COULD DO FOR A FELLOW AVENGER. I ONLY WISH IT WERE UNDER BETTER CIRCUMSTANCES. COME.

I'M NOT WEARING A SIGN ON MY BACK, AM I?

NO. THEY REMEMBER ANANSI, THE SPIDER GOD. THEY MUST THINK YOU ARE A REPRESENTATIVE.

FIGURES I HAD TO TRAVEL HALFWAY AROUND THE GLOBE TO GET SOME LOVE.

YES, WELL, JUST DON'T REMOVE THE MASK.

MAN, I'VE BEEN AROUND A LOT OF TOP SECRET LABS IN MY TIME, BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN DEVICES LIKE *THESE*.

WE MAPPED THE HUMAN GENOME 50 YEARS BEFORE WESTERN SCIENTISTS.

UNFORTUNATELY, WE STILL CAN'T FIGURE OUT THE SOURCE OF YOUR ILLNESS.

OUR FINAL EFFORT IS-- *THIS*.

THANKS, BUT... I'M NOT REALLY A *SALAD* MAN. MAYBE IF YOU HAD A BURGER WITH IT--

THESE ARE THE HEART-SHAPED HERBS. THEY ARE A SPECIAL PLANT FOUND ONLY IN WAKANDA. ONLY A WARRIOR PROVEN TO BE WORTHY OF BEING THE KING CAN INGEST THEM. THEY GIVE THE LEADER OF THE BLACK PANTHER CLAN HIS SPECIAL ABILITIES.

OH.

THEN...THEN WHY AM *I* ALLOWED TO EAT THEM? I MEAN...I'M NOT...

YOU ARE A WARRIOR WITH THE HEART OF A KING. DIG IN.

HMMMPH. CHEWY.

WOULD IT BE SACRILEGIOUS TO ADD SALAD DRESSING?

YES.

HMMM HMMM GOOD! NOW WHAT?

WELL, IT WILL TAKE A DAY OR SO FOR RESULTS.

OKAY, THEN... GOT CABLE? THE SOPRANOS ARE ON TONIGHT...

YES...BUT YOU'RE IN AFRICA. MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO DO SOMETHING UNIQUE TO THE REGION?

IS THIS GONNA END UP WITH ME HAVING TO FIGHT SOMEBODY? I'M NOT REALLY FEELING UP TO A SCRAP WITH THE MAN-APE.

TELL ME ABOUT IT. YOU AND ME BOTH.

...I MEAN, WHAT'S *UP* WITH THAT GUY? IS HE JUST A GUY IN A WHITE MONKEY SUIT?

YES.

DOES A GUY IN A WHITE MONKEY SUIT THINK OTHER PEOPLE ARE SUPPOSED TO QUAKE IN HIS PRESENCE?

I NEVER GOT IT.

UH, NOT TO BE INSULTING, BUT THE LAST TIME I ENTERED A TEMPLE LIKE THIS SOMEBODY TRIED TO USE ME AS A HUMAN SACRIFICE.

THIS IS THE TEMPLE OF ANANSI--THE SPIDER GOD. YOUR NAME-SAKE.

WOW...

YOU'RE RIGHT. IT COULD HAPPEN HERE, TOO. LET'S HEAD BACK.

HA! GOOD ONE!

ER... OKAY.

SO MAYBE A QUICK SNAPSHOT IN FRONT OF THE TEMPLE WOULDN'T BE A GOOD MOVE EITHER?

PETER? I HAVE YOUR RESULTS.

...NO, I THINK SHE'LL DIG IT. SHE GOT HERS DONE LIKE THIS ON A SHOOT IN THE CARIBBEAN ONE YEAR AND--

I SEEM TO BE INTERRUPTING.

THIS *ISN'T* WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.

SHE'S *NOT* BRAIDING YOUR HAIR?

I GUESS IT *IS* WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.

EXCUSE ME, LADIES. WE NEED TO TALK ALONE.

Okay, I've got to face facts. I've tried every expert possible. There's no way around it. I am going to die.

I'd never thought I'd go out like this. I mean, I always thought I would die, but in a quick but stupid way. Like a fatal paper cut from Batroc the Leaper.

Well, could be worse. When I first started doing this, back in high school, I thought I would die a bachelor. Whew! Check *THAT* one off the list.

But I never got to do anything really nice for my wife. No fancy vacations, no expensive gifts...no kids...

I was always too busy fulfilling my "responsibility" to my so-called "great power" to really take care of my real responsibilities...to my family. And now I'm about to lose everything.

I don't even have *LIFE INSURANCE!*

BANG! BANG!

GREAT-- I CAN'T EVEN GET MY MOPE ON WITHOUT SOME MORON COMMITTING A CRIME.

WELL, SOMEONE JUST VOLUNTEERED TO BE THE OUTLET FOR MY FRUSTRATIONS!

TRY AND SHOOT ME? I'M *THE OX!!!*

NO ONE WELCHES ON FAT TEDDY. AND, NEXT TIME YOU GONNA BET, THINK TWICE BEFORE YA PUT IT ON THE KNICKS.

CLINK CLINK CLINK CLINK

WHO'S THERE?

IT'D BE SMART TO KEEP IT MOVING, PAL, UNLESS YOU WANT SOME OF THE SAME. DOESN'T MATTER TO ME NONE.

CRIPES, IT'S SPIDER-MAN. YA WANT ANOTHER BEATING FROM ME? REMEMBER LAST TIME WHEN I--

WHAMP!

GOOD ONE. THAT ALMOST HURT. OKAY, COME GET YER BEATING.

WHAT HAPPENED, JOE PISCIPO? CAT GOT YER TONGUE? YOU'D USTA HAVE TOLD THREE STOOPID JOKES BY NOW.

WHAM!

HEY... WHAT THE--

YOU LOOK SURPRISED.

MORLUN?! BUT HOW...?

YOUR TIME IS NEAR. GET YOUR AFFAIRS IN ORDER, BOY. SAY YOUR GOODBYES. DON'T WORRY, YOUR WIFE WILL GET OVER IT. THE OLD WOMAN, ON THE OTHER HAND...

KRAK

THWAK

SPLUNCH

THAP!

WHO--!?

DAREDEVIL...?

I'M SURE HE DESERVES IT... BUT BEFORE YOU CAVE IN HIS HEAD...IT'S OVER UNLESS YOU WANT HIM *DEAD*.

I MEAN, I'D BE UPSET IF SOMEBODY CALLED ME JOE PISCIPO TOO, BUT STILL...

GET OUT OF HERE. HE NEEDS MEDICAL ATTENTION.

AND *YOU* NEED SOME ANGER MANAGEMENT. NOT TO BE THE POT CALLING THE KETTLE BLACK...

I...I THOUGHT HE WAS...

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO YOU THOUGHT HE WAS. GET OUTTA HERE. AND YOU OWE ME ONE.

FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...
THE SANCTUM OF STEPHEN STRANGE

DON'T TOUCH THAT! SOME OF THESE ARTIFACTS ARE THOUSANDS OF YEARS OLD.

WHY? WOULD THAT OPEN THE GATES TO HELL OR SOMETHING?

NO... IT'S JUST VERY FRAGILE.

OH! THAT'S NOT GOOD.

YOU CAN TELL?

YOU HAVE A MALADY. BUT NOT PHYSICAL.

OKAY, NOW WE'RE GETTING SOMEWHERE. WHAT'S THE DEAL, DOC?

LET THE EYE OF AGAMOTTO PEER INTO THE STYGIAN DARKNESS AND SEEK OUT THE TRUTH.

Y'KNOW, NOT TO BE SILLY, BUT I SAW SOMETHING VERY SIMILAR AT SHARPER IMAGE...

YES. I SAW IT, TOO. QUIET NOW...

LOOK, I WAS NEVER KNOWN FOR MY BEDSIDE MANNER, SO I WILL SPEAK VERY DIRECTLY. I *CANNOT* LIFT THIS CURSE. AND THE FORCES AGAINST YOU ARE UNSTOPPABLE.

OKAY, IS THAT LIKE THE OVERCONFIDENT BAD GUY SAYING "YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT THIS TIME, SPIDER-MAN!" TYPE-UNSTOPPABLE... OR PUT-YOUR-AFFAIRS-IN-ORDER UNSTOPPABLE?

YOU'RE A GOOD MAN WHO'S LED A GOOD LIFE. PREPARE TO DIE.

TO BE CONTINUED IN MARVEL KNIGHTS SPIDER-MAN #20

MARVEL MK 20

THE HUNTER™

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 5 OF 12

REGINALD HUDLIN • PAT LEE

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THE OTHER

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 2 OF 12

PREVIOUSLY IN

Friendly Neighborhood SPIDER-MAN #

The diagnosis is in -- and it's bad news for Peter Parker.

There were warning signs: In recent weeks, Spider-Man has been weaker and slower than usual, his powers even completely failing him at key moments. And when a new super-villain calling himself The Tracer arrived to cause mayhem, Spider-Man was nearly killed in his attempt to capture him.

The wall-crawler's battle wounds brought him to Doctor Castillo, who discovered that there is, in fact, something terribly wrong with him—something that modern medicine can't even begin to comprehend, let alone cure.

All indications point to one thing: Peter's condition is terminal.

When Peter's loved ones learn of the danger, they urge him to contact his super-powered friends whose resources in medicine, magic, and technology might hold the solution to Peter's affliction. But no matter where Peter goes or who he sees, the conclusion is always the same: there is no cure.

Now, Spider-Man is faced with a choice—should he keep fighting a battle he can't hope to win or cherish his last moments on Earth with his loved ones?

"RETREAT"

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LATVERIA.

DID YOU HEAR THE BELLS CHIME? *CURFEW* WILL BEGIN SOON!

STILL? I THOUGHT WITH THE DEATH OF DOOM--

SSSHHH! THE STREETS ARE WATCHING...LISTENING. NEVER SPEAK OF THE MASTER'S DEMISE. I DOUBT IT WILL EVER HAPPEN.

OKAY, THE "HIDING FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC" PART JUST GOT REAL EASY.

I DON'T KNOW... I'M STILL NOT SURE THIS WAS A GOOD IDEA.

KIND OF LATE IN THE GAME FOR THAT NOW.

THERE IS NO WAY I'M GETTING BACK ON A PLANE. THIS IS EXCITING!

WE AREN'T THAT FAR FROM THE CASTLE. LET'S GO FOR IT.

YOU CRAZY KIDS....REMEMBER I CAN'T WALK AS FAST AS YOU!

I'M GOING TO GO AHEAD AND OPEN THE DOOR...SEE YOU IN A MINUTE.

OH DARN, I FORGOT MY KEY.

LOOK, AN OPEN WINDOW!

I'LL JUST--

YIIIKES!!

WHOA. NASTY FISH TANK, DR. DOOM!

HELL-LO! VICKY BOY! ANYBODY HOME?

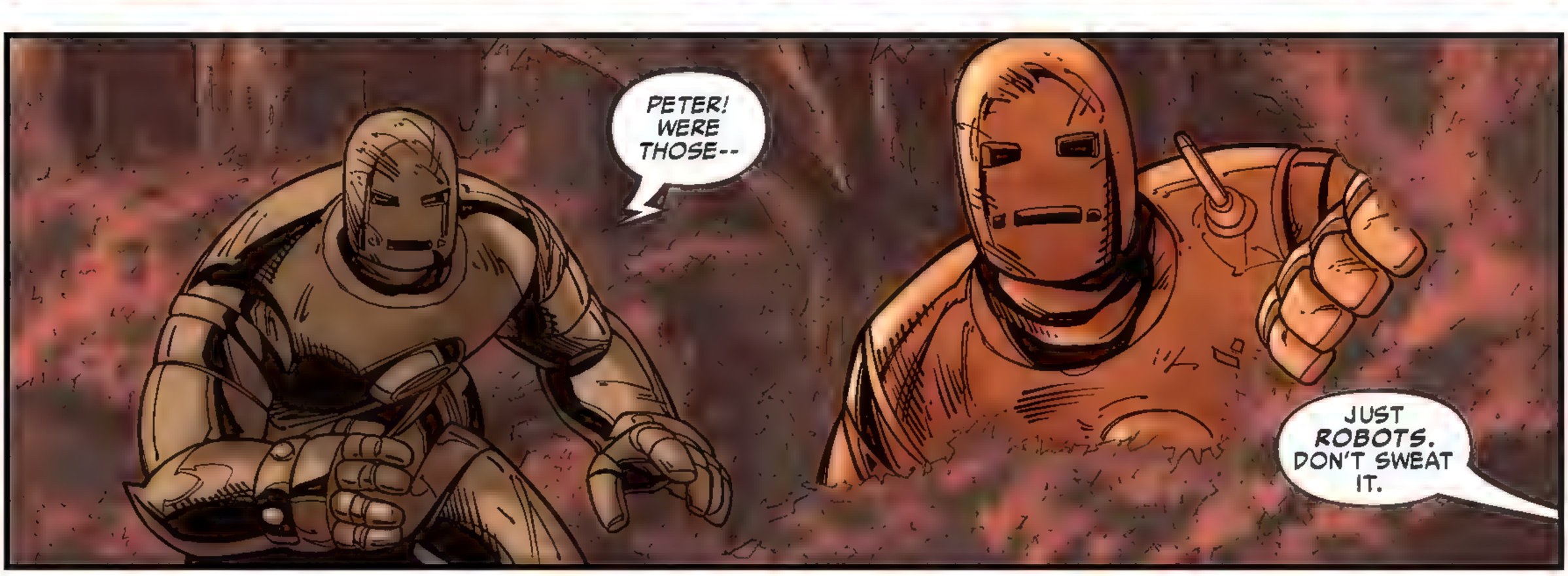
OKAY, LET'S SEE WHAT'S *REALLY* GOING ON.

OH DOOMY... LASER TRIP ALARMS ARE *SOOOO* '80S. WHO'S YOUR DECORATOR?

IN FACT, THIS WHOLE PLACE IS VERY IVANA TRUMP. HE NEEDS A VISIT FROM THE "QUEER EYE FOR THE DICTATORIAL GUY."

WHAM
WHAM

GEE, I'D LIKE TO SAY I *PLANNED* THAT ONE.


*PETER! WERE THOSE--
JUST **ROBOTS.** DON'T SWEAT IT.

MY WORD! WHAT DISTURBING ART!

WAIT TILL YOU MEET HIS PETS.

THE ENTRANCE TO THE "WACKY DEVICES ROOM" SHOULD BE UP AHEAD.

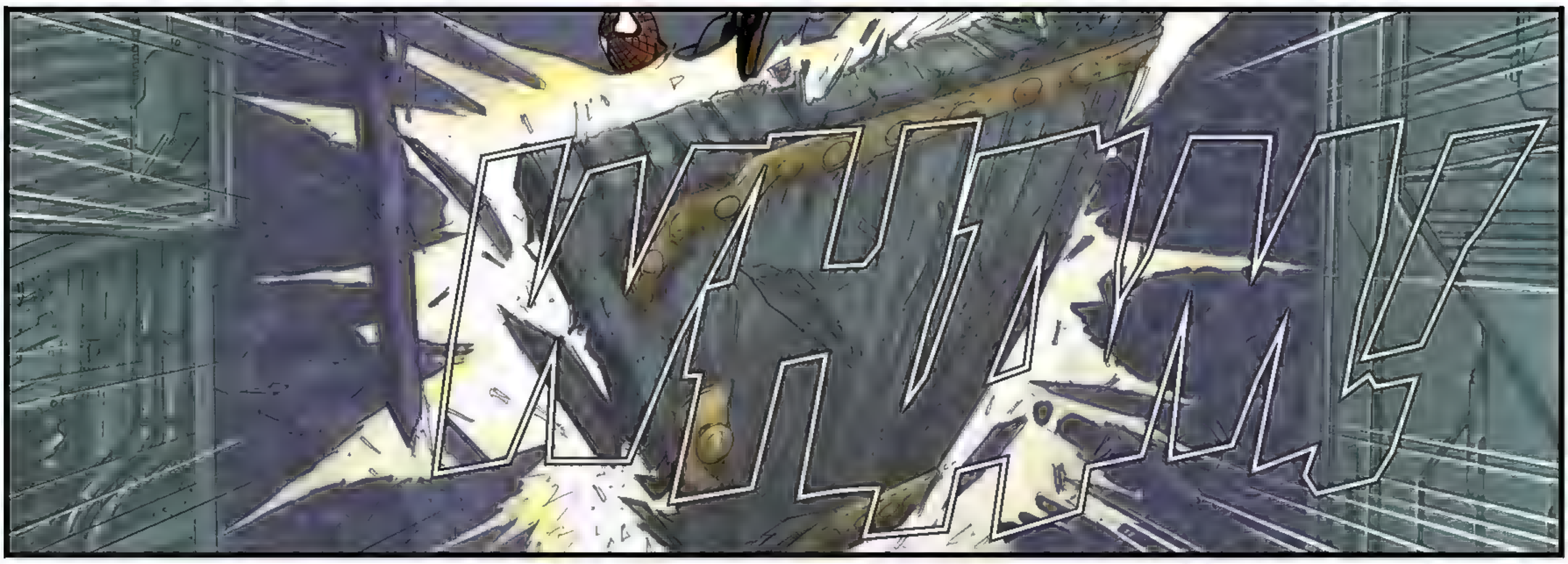
I COULD NEVER MAKE MY WAY DOWN THESE NARROW WINDING STAIRS ON MY OWN. WOULD YOUR FRIEND MIND IF I KEPT THIS ARMOR?

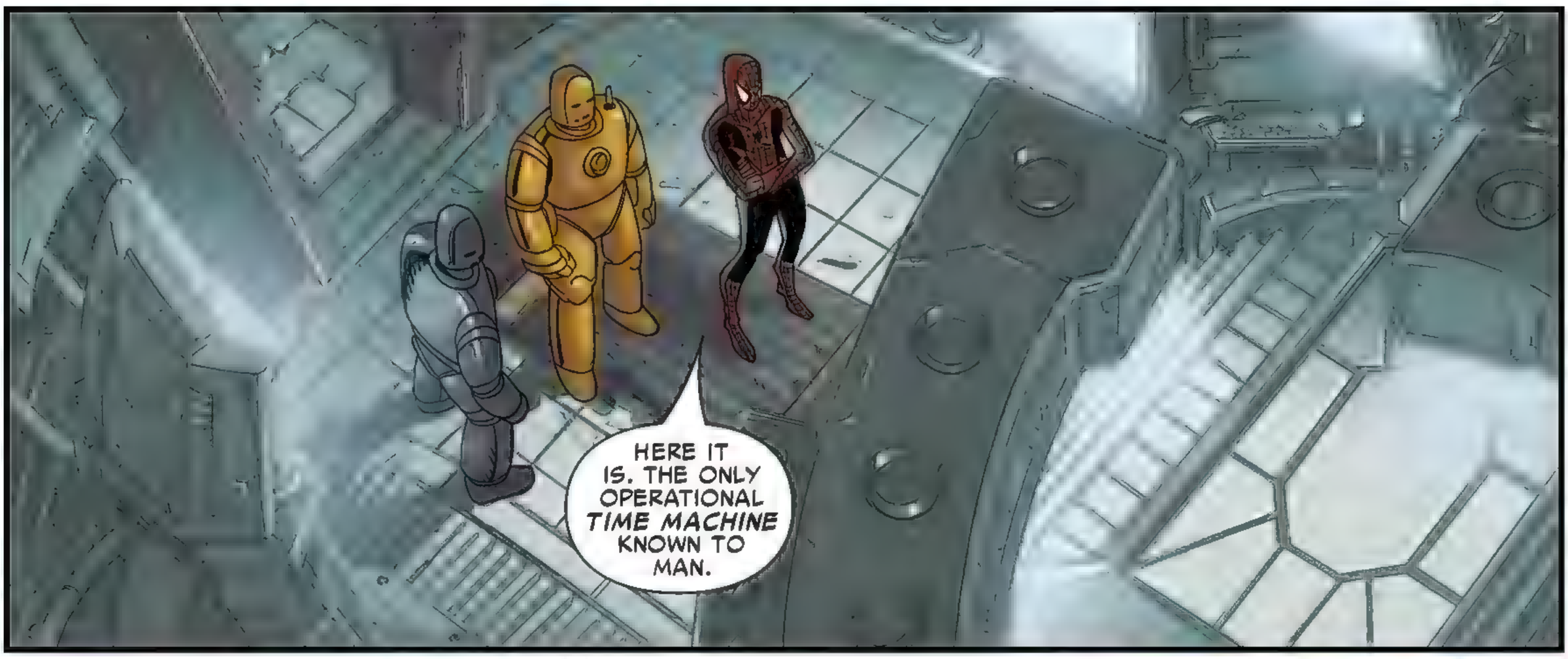
I PROMISED HIM IT WAS A LOANER... BUT I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO. YOU KNOW HOW GUYS ARE ABOUT THEIR FIRST SPORTS CAR.

OOOOKAY, MAKE A LEFT AT THE SUBATOMIC DEFRIBERDIGGIT...

LOCKED?

NOPE.


KLAAM!


HERE IT IS. THE ONLY OPERATIONAL *TIME MACHINE* KNOWN TO MAN.

DOES THAT MEAN WE CAN FINALLY TAKE THESE THINGS OFF?
YES, YOU WON'T NEED THEM FOR THE TRIP.

HOW CAN POOR IRON MAN STAND TO BE COOPED UP IN THIS ALL DAY?
I WAS DIGGING IT. IT'S KINDA LIKE BEING YOUR OWN SUV.

SO, ARE YOU GUYS READY FOR THIS?
PETER, YOU KEEP ASKING ME THAT. THE QUESTION IS, ARE *YOU*?

HOPE I READ THE INSTRUCTIONS RIGHT.

OH MAN--IT *WORKED!*

DO *NOT* TELL ME YOU REALLY WEREN'T SURE...

OH MY WORD...

DON'T BE FREAKED OUT. IT'S JUST "CHRONAL DISPLACEMENT." WE'RE NOT QUITE PHASED INTO THIS TIME...WHICH MEANS THEY CAN'T SEE US...AND WE CAN'T HARM ANYTHING THAT WOULD AFFECT THE FUTURE...MEANING OUR PRESENT.

--ANYONE FOLLOW THAT?

GOD, PETER, IT'S NOT LIKE WE DIDN'T SEE *BACK TO THE FUTURE*, LIKE, A HUNDRED TIMES.

PETER, YOU MIND YOUR AUNT MAY AND UNCLE BEN, YOU HEAR ME?

OH, PETER, YOUR PARENTS ARE EVEN BETTER LOOKING THAN THEY WERE IN PICTURES.

WE'LL BE BACK SOON. I LOVE YOU, PETER PARKER.

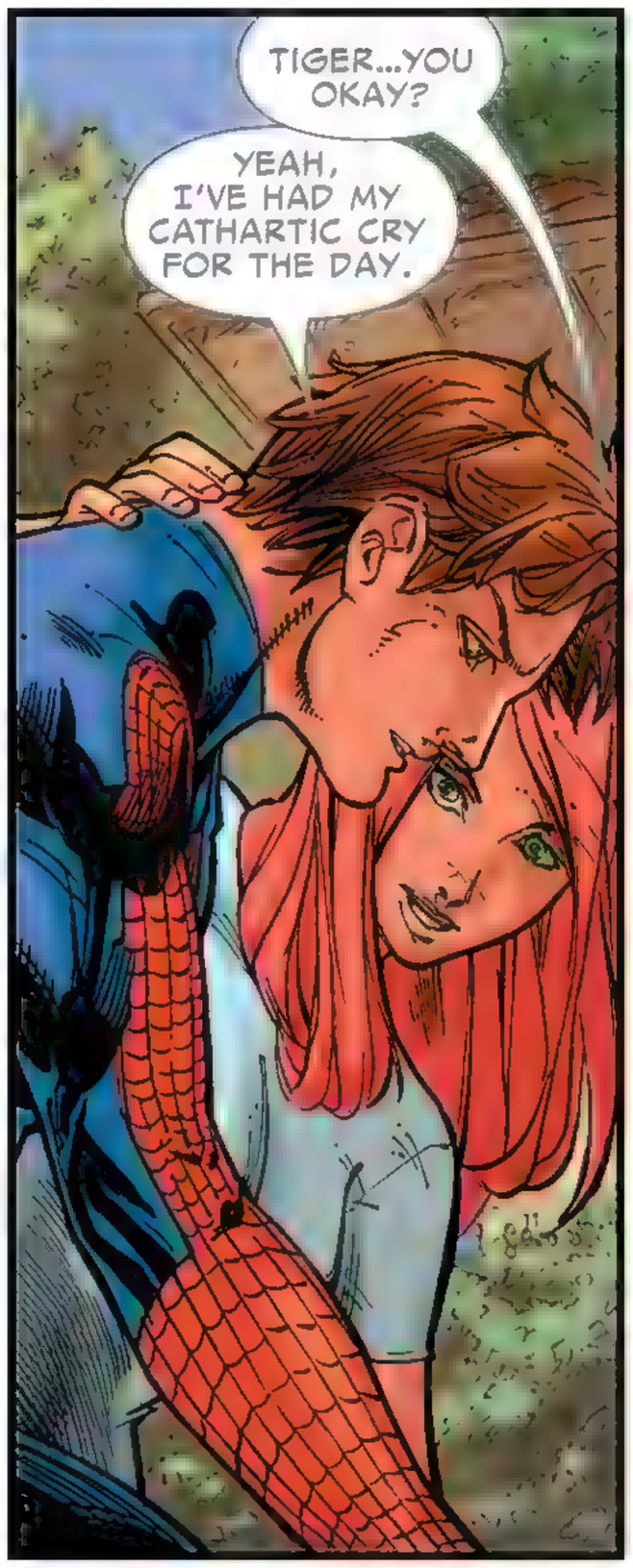
I WUV YOU, DADDY.

WAIT!

DON'T LEAVE! I NEED YOU!
MAK 121

IF YOU STAY, YOU DON'T DIE, UNCLE BEN DOESN'T DIE...
MAK 121

...I DON'T DIE...


TIGER...YOU OKAY?
YEAH, I'VE HAD MY CATHARTIC CRY FOR THE DAY.

I THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA. I MEAN, I HAVE ACCESS TO ALL THIS COOL STUFF AND I NEVER TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT.
WELL, CONSIDERING YOU HAD TO BREAK AND ENTER THE CASTLE OF AN EGOMANIACAL EVIL GENIUS, I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY WE HAVEN'T SPENT OUR WEEKENDS TIME-TRAVELING.
I JUST HOPE AUNT MAY IS OKAY.

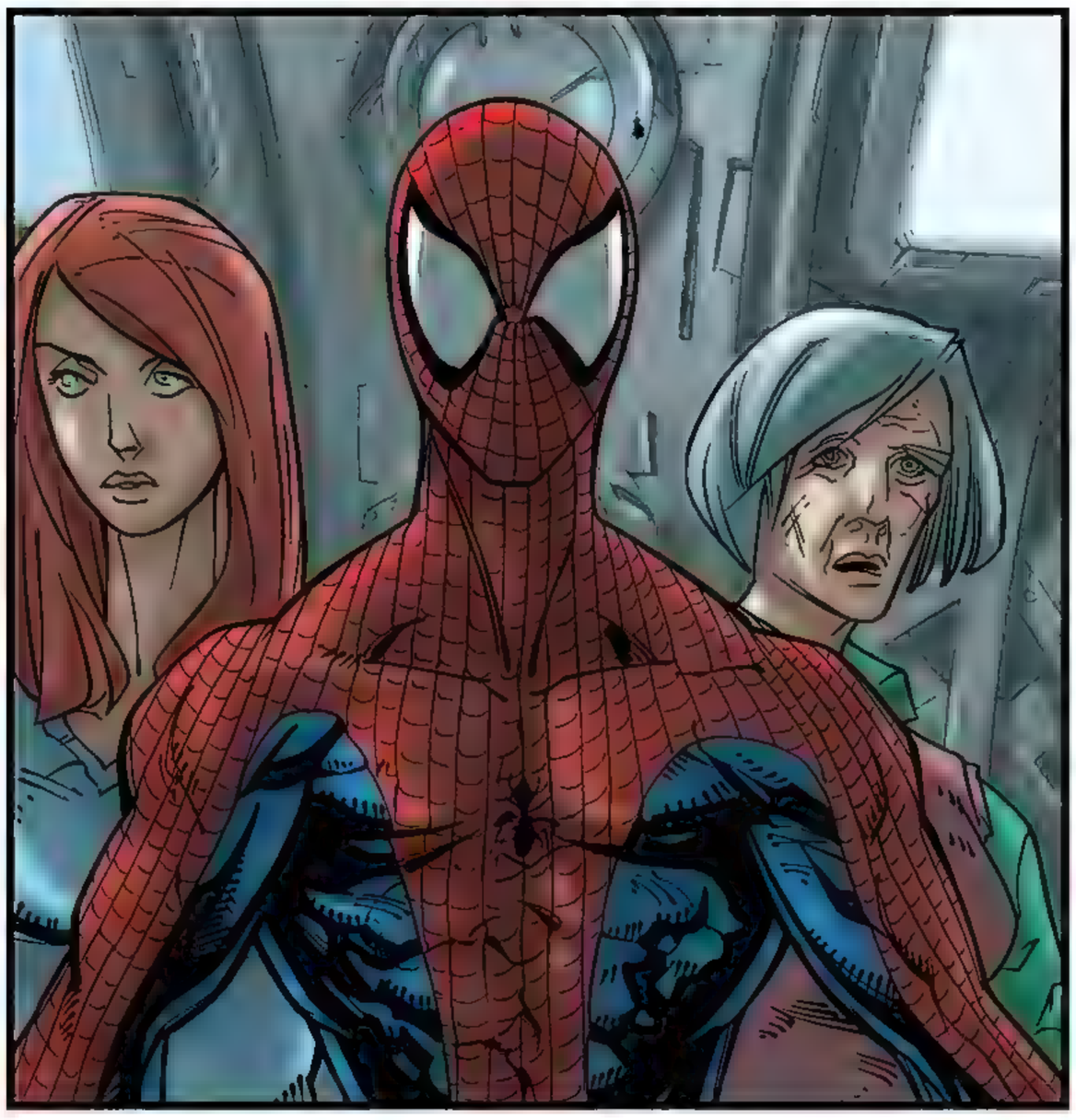
UH, AUNT MAY?

EH? PETER?

TAKE YOUR TIME.

OH NO. IF YOU'RE READY, I'M READY...

...BUT YOU WERE RIGHT, PETER. THIS WAS A GREAT IDEA.



HMMMM, NOT THE BEST TIME FOR A BIG FRACAS...

STAY STILL! THEY SEEM TO ONLY RECOGNIZE ME AS A THREAT. MAYBE I CAN...

GET DOWN, MAY!
MY WORD!
ZAAAAAAP

WHAK

THUD

THERE'S NO WAY I CAN BEAT THIS MANY ROBOTS...AND I CAN'T EVEN SEE AUNT MAY AND--

UGGGGGG! MY GUT!

NOW IS *NOT* THE TIME FOR MY "CONDITION" TO KICK IN.

...CAN'T BREATHE... CAN'T SEE STRAIGHT...

...NOT LIKE THIS... NOT LIKE THIS...

SHRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAK

O-O-
O-O-O-O-O-H
M-M-M-M-Y-Y-Y
W-W-W-O-O-O-
R-R-D-D-D!

SHRAAAAAAAAAK

ARE YOU OKAY, HONEY?

FINE... *NOW.*

DOES AUNT MAY WANNA TAKE MY PLACE IN THE AVENGERS?

LATER...

UGH-- HERE YOU GO, TONY. THANKS FOR LENDING ME THESE.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO CARRY ALL THAT STUFF, PETER. WE'VE GOT MOTORIZED CARTS STRONG ENOUGH TO MOVE THAT STUFF AROUND.

WHEW... REALLY? THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN GOOD TO KNOW ABOUT.

KLUNK

SO DID THAT OLD ARMOR GIVE YOU ANY TROUBLE?

ARE YOU KIDDING? DO YOU KNOW HOW BIG THE AARP AFTERMARKET IS FOR YOUR STUFF?

SO WHAT'S THE PLAN NOW?

WELL, I'VE GOT A LIST OF ALL THE COOL STUFF I'VE NEVER DONE WITH MY FAMILY, SO I'LL KEEP KNOCKING THEM OFF ONE BY ONE.

ANY VACATION PLANS BESIDES LATVERIA?

DUNNO... I WAS THINKING VEGAS.

YES!!!! VEGAS BABY... *VEGAS!*

AH YES... THAT WOULD BE A PLACE YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH, THEN?

ARE YOU KIDDING? I'VE GOT A 25,000-SQUARE-FOOT PENTHOUSE SUITE THERE. AND A *LOT* OF FRIENDS...

...IS THIS TRIP *WITH* YOUR WIFE?

OF COURSE.

NEVER MIND.

VEGAS...

YOU KNOW, I DON'T HAVE ANY HEALTH INSURANCE. I COULDN'T PASS ANY COMPANY PHYSICAL EVEN BEFORE I WAS SICK. RADIOACTIVE SPIDER BITES DO THAT TO YOU.

"BUT WITH MY SPIDER-SENSE, I COULD KILL AT BLACKJACK. MAKE ENOUGH MONEY TO PAY FOR MY FAMILY AFTER I'M GONE."

ONE MORE, PLEASE.

SON, THAT'S PLUMB LOCO!

"I'VE NEVER USED MY POWERS FOR PERSONAL GAIN...BUT THIS WOULDN'T BE FOR ME, WOULD IT? BESIDES, ISN'T PART OF BEING RESPONSIBLE TAKING CARE OF YOUR LOVED ONES?"

I DON'T *BELIEVE* IT! AGAIN?

COME WITH US, SIR.

"OF COURSE, I KNOW THEY'LL SUSPECT SOMETHING. COUNTING CARDS, SOMETHING."

NO WAY. I'VE SEEN "*CASINO.*" YOU'RE NOT THREATENING ME WITH A BUZZ SAW.

DON'T MAKE US GET ROUGH, SIR.

DON'T MAKE *ME.*

"BUT THE REAL PROBLEM IS... WHO CAN ACTUALLY MANAGE A REAL VACATION?

"THERE'S ALWAYS SOME SUPER-POWERED CREEP THAT SHOWS UP NO MATTER WHERE YOU GO.

"GO TO HAWAII... ATTUMA SHOWS UP. THEY'RE EVERYWHERE."

OH WELL...

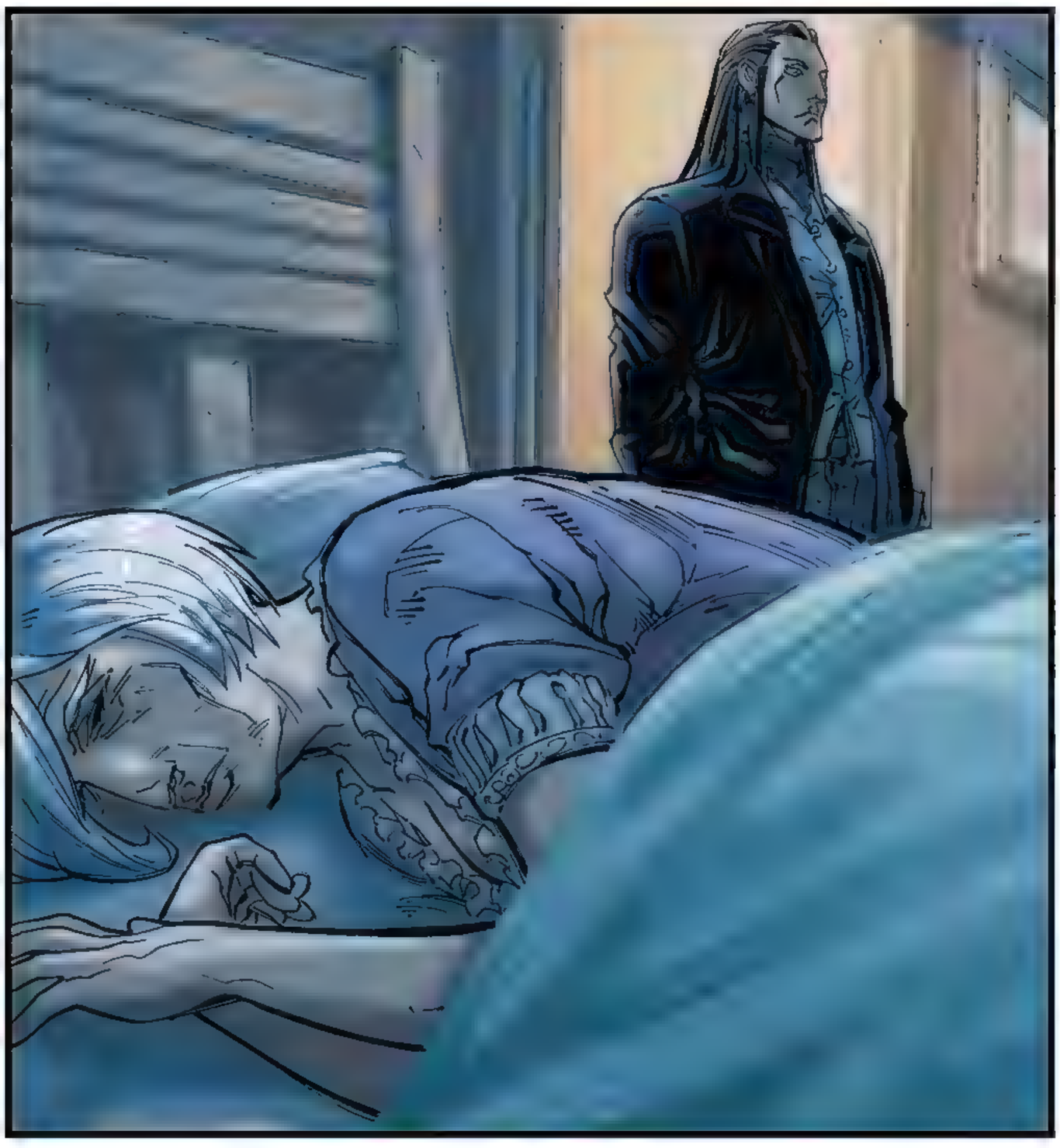
I FEEL YOUR PAIN. BUT IF YOU REALLY WANT TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL, I'VE GOT THE *PERFECT* GETAWAY.

REALLY? WHAT IS IT?

"WELL, PETER, LET'S JUST SAY YOU WON'T BELIEVE THE VIEW..."

THE TIME HAS COME.

IT IS TIME FOR ME TO FEAST.



Not here, either.

"Where on Earth could he be?"

PETER, I MEAN... WOW.

IT'S SOMETHIN' ELSE, EH?

IT SURE *IS*. FIRST BREAKFAST IN PARIS, AND NOW THIS.

ONLY THE BEST FOR MY GIRL.

TELL ME ABOUT IT. HOW MANY GIRLS GET TO ENJOY A *VIEW* LIKE THIS?

LIKE I SAID...

...ONLY THE BEST FOR MY GIRL.

NICE OF TONY TO LEND US ONE OF HIS SPACE-PODS.

HEY, WHAT'RE FRIENDS FOR?

PETER?

YEAH, BABE?

THANK YOU.

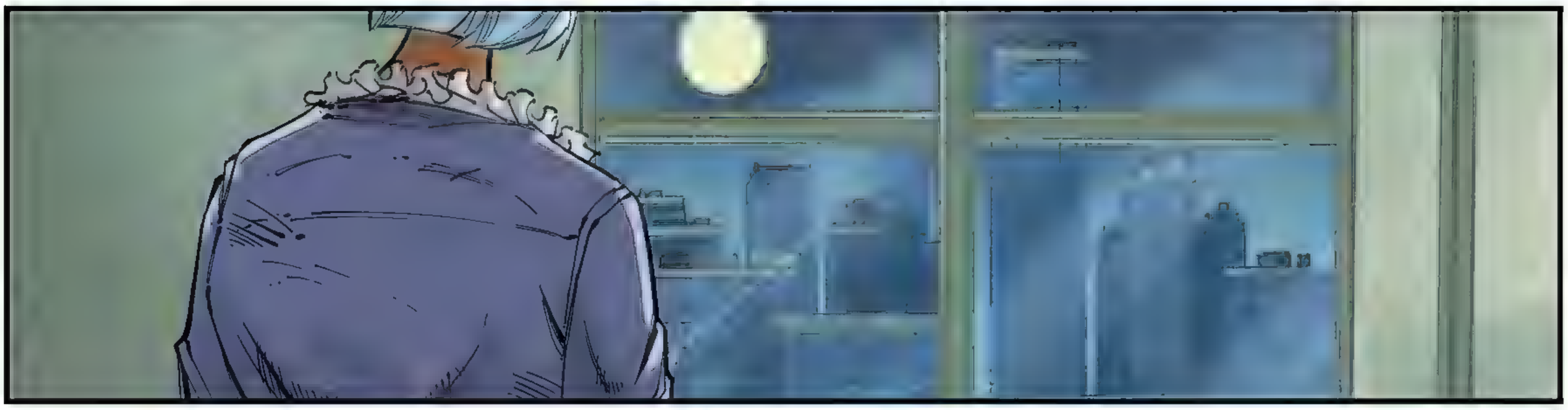
NO PROBLEM, BABE.

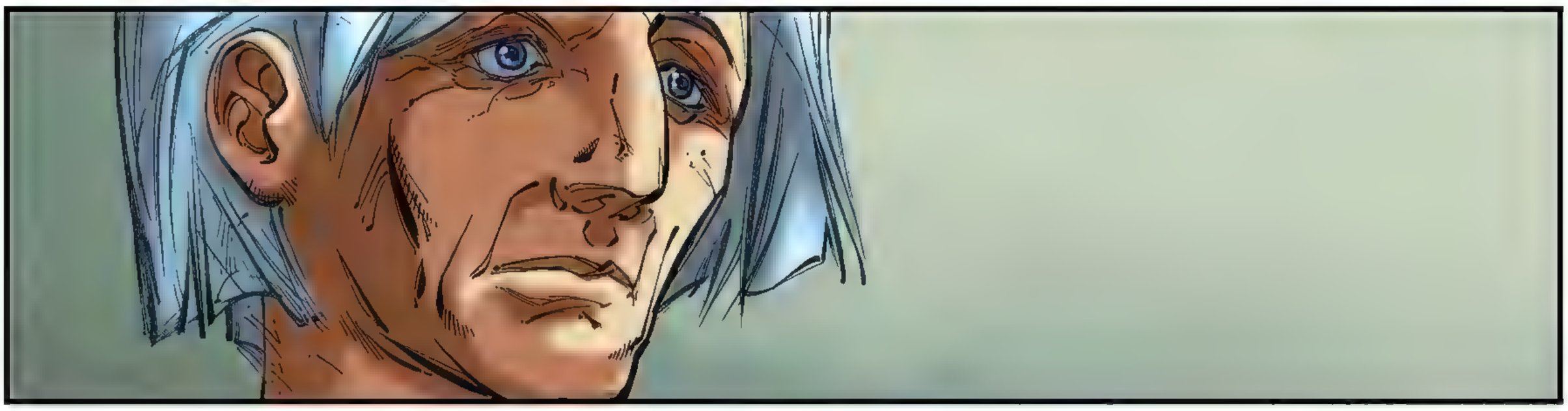
I MEAN IT, PETER. YOU'RE GOING THROUGH A LOT--

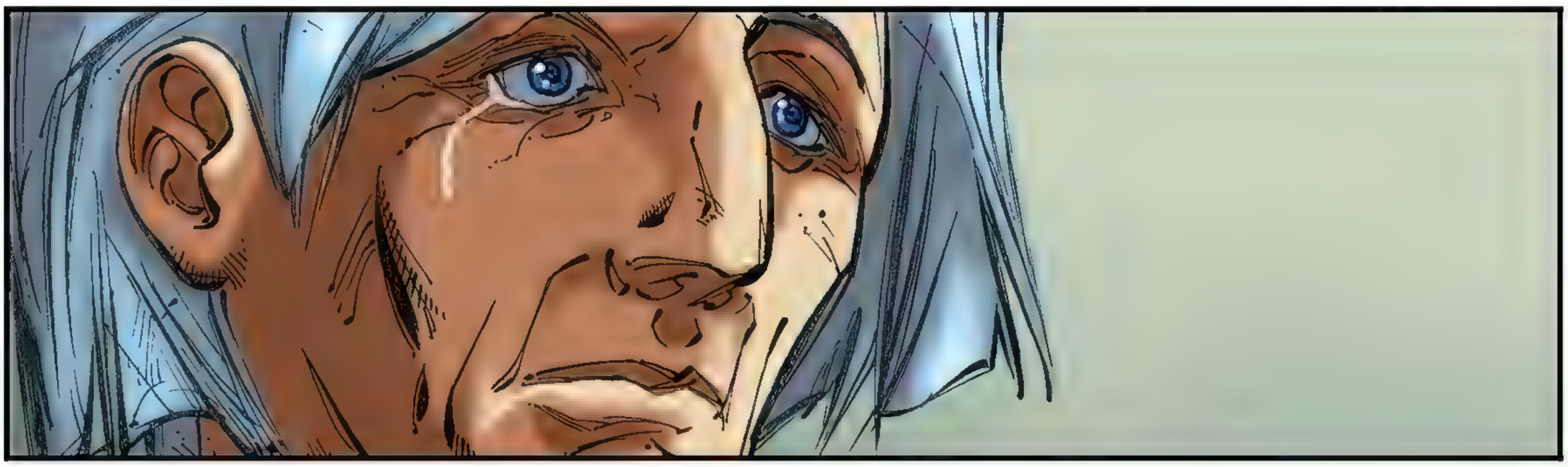
WE'RE ALL GOING THROUGH A LOT.

I KNOW, BUT YOU--YOU'RE ***HERE.*** YOU'RE GOING THROUGH IT ***HERE.*** WITH US.

WITH ME.







TO BE CONTINUED IN AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #526

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526

THE

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

HUDLIN • DEODATO JR • PIMENTEL

THE WEB OF LIFE AND DESTINY™

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 6 OF 12

MIKE DEODATO JR

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Even though we know we're going to die, we don't dwell on it too much.

Maybe it's a survival mechanism. We're so scared of dying, if we focused on it, we'd be too paralyzed with fear to get anything done. I mean, who would pick up the donuts?

Even us devil-may-care types, who risk our lives every day, don't focus much on our inevitable end, other than using that fear as a springboard to acts of reckless foolishness that some people confuse with heroism.

But what happens when that springboard breaks?

When your Spider-Sense can no longer protect you? When your clock starts to tick, what happens then?

I'll tell you. The mundane becomes spectacular. You don't need a bank robbery or a showdown with the Green Goblin to feel that charge.

Simply swinging across town to pick up your paycheck is enough. Everything seems sweeter. More vivid. Maybe it's the illness flowing through your veins, or maybe it's just knowing your end is near. It doesn't matter, because you feel...

...alive.

SPIDER-MAN: THE OTHER--EVOLVE OR DIE PART SIX:

RECKONING

How much time do you have left? I guess you never know...until the moment comes.

What I *DO* know is this: When mine comes...

IT'S TIME.

...I will not go easy...

...but who says that time has to be *NOW?*

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, DO I KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING ON MY ROOF? I'M A *NEWSMAN!* I KNOW EVERYTHING GOING ON AROUND--

SMASH

HEY!

CRIPES, FINISH HIM OFF, SPIDER-MAN! BEFORE YOU WRECK MY *WHOLE* OFFICE!

Too many innocents in here. Even Jonah.

I've got to get aw--

WHAM

As if that didn't hurt enough, now my side's acting up again.

-UUNNNHHH-

Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Shrug it off. Get up.

Laurie Lynton. We went to high school together. She is so cute.

And I never got to kiss her.

But I CAN protect her.

OOHHH!!!!

THWACK

NICE ONE!

THAT'S GOTTA HURT.

DID YOU EVER SEE HULK VS. THING? NOW THAT WAS A FIGHT!

CHUD

Got to get away from him. Or at least get him away from people.

Besides, if I'm going down, it WON'T be at the *Daily Bugle*.

WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT? YOU GOT YOUR SCOOP. BENSON, ABRAMS, GET TO WORK!

YOU JUST DON'T GIVE UP, DO YOU, MORLUN?

HERE'S A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR YOUR TROUBLE, BRIGHT EYES.

This time, I have a plan.

Use his momentum against him... before he tears off my webbing...

...thought of this move a while ago... but never had to use it...never faced a threat like this before...

YEOW! LOOK OUT!

CHAKK

New Yorkers...doesn't matter how dangerous the situation is...they *HAVE* to look.

I don't suppose that actually worked...?

Of course not.

Can't risk any more collateral damage. Too many civilians around. It's time for a change of scenery and I know *JUST* the place.

Empire State University.

Where Spider-Man was born.

K-R-A-S-H

And, now, where he may die.

Oh, the irony.

KRUNCH

Here's where I make my last stand.

DUDE, EVEN WITHOUT THE SPIDER-SENSE--YOUR COLOGNE IS KILLING ME!

REALLY, MAN--*ARAMIS*?

Gotta keep moving.

WHAK

SMASH

He can't hit what he can't--

--touch.

WHAM

KRAASH

Wouldn't mind an assist from Iron Man right now.

WHUD

Any Avenger, really.

Even the Wasp.

WHY MUST THE PREY ALWAYS STRUGGLE SO PITEOUSLY?

HEY, MORLUN...

...STEVEN SEAGAL CALLED--

--HE WANTS HIS PONYTAIL BACK.

THWIP

THWIP

I COULD GIVE YOU A QUICK DEATH.

WHACK

SPLUD

BUT YOU WILL NOT CHOOSE IT. IT'S *ALWAYS* THE SAME.

KRAK

NEVER been hit that hard.

THUD

And I've gone toe-to-toe with the Hulk.

Look at him-- not even sweating.

Gotta go BIG--quick.

WHAP

Must stay conscious.

Ignore the pain.

KRUNCH

SKRAK

Must be hurt bad...feel numb... no one-liners left...maybe I'm...

Maybe I'm dead.

IF IT'S ANY CONSOLATION, KNOW THIS:

YOU'VE FARED BETTER THAN MOST OF YOUR KIND.

AND I'VE KILLED MANY.

NO.

Not like this.

NOT

TIK

BY

KA-RUUNCH

HIM

I've been through a thousand of these scrapes.

Fought every super-villain that ever put on the spandex and beat them--twice, three times...I've lost count.

TAK

Who is *HE* to challenge *ME?*

I've conquered fate before.

This is no different.

WHUN

NO different.

NO DIFFERENT.

I can feel my skin tearing.

Knuckles breaking.

Doesn't matter.

I'm winning...

I'm winning...

I'm winning...

I'LL TELL YOUR FAMILY YOU DID YOUR BEST...

...SO THEY'LL NEVER LOSE *SIGHT* OF YOUR RESOLVE.

SQUITCH!

NOOOO!!

He didn't.

NO.

NO!

DELICIOUS.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...

...I will fear no evil...

...For thou art with me...

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THE

THE

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 7 OF 12

J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI • MIKE WIERINGO

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THE OTHER

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 7 OF 12

PREVIOUSLY IN THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #526

The diagnosis is in--and it's bad news for Peter Parker.

There were warning signs: in recent weeks, Spider-Man has been weaker and slower than usual, his powers completely failing him at key moments. Peter's battle wounds brought him to Doctor Castillo, who specializes in treating super-human ailments. She discovered that there was, in fact, something terribly wrong with him. All indications point to one thing: Peter's co dition is terminal.

Meanwhile, the vampiric Morlun, who has hunted and destroyed "spider-men" for centuries, has returned from the dead to eradicate the web-slinger and consume his life force. Spider-Man barely defeated Morlun once before, but now his mysterious affliction has affected many of his powers; Morlun couldn't have picked a better time to strike. A brutal battle between the two left Spider-Man beaten, bloody and missing an eye. Spider-Man's life now hangs by a thread…

"BOWING TO THE INEVITABLE"

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As he surveys the form that lies motionless on the street before him, he knows two things.

He knows that he has won, that he has beaten his enemy.

And he knows that the soul, the spirit, the essence within the shattered body still burns as brightly as it did before... more, perhaps, sensing its own imminent death, the way a candle gutters bright a moment before the flame dies.

And now...now it is time.

Time to feed.

THE SIRENS ARE AN INTERRUPTION. AN ANNOYANCE. FOR ALL HIS STRENGTH, HE IS NOT INVULNERABLE, NOR CAN HE FEED AND FIGHT AT THE SAME TIME.

AND IN THE TIME IT TAKES TO KILL THEM, OTHERS WILL ARRIVE TO TAKE THEIR PLACE, SWARMING LIKE ANTS OVER THE BODY OF A DYING SPIDER.

THEIR DEATHS ARE INCIDENTAL TO HIS DECISION. LET THEM HAVE THE SPIDER. REMOVE THE BODY TO A PLACE WHERE HE CAN FIND IT LATER, AND FINISH IN PRIVATE WHAT HE BEGAN HERE. THEY WILL DO HIM A SERVICE, ENSURING THAT THE BODY IS STILL ALIVE WHEN HE COMES FOR IT.

HE HAS NO USE FOR THE BODY, IN ANY EVENT.

BUT THEN, BROKEN AS THE BODY IS, WOUNDED NEARLY TO DEATH, ONE-EYED AND SHATTERED... EVEN IF HE WERE TO NEVER TOUCH IT AGAIN, HE KNOWS THAT NO ONE WILL EVER HAVE USE FOR IT AGAIN.

HE HAS WON.

HE HAS WON.

GET BACK!

HOLD THOSE PEOPLE BACK!

WE NEED AN AMBULANCE OVER HERE!

HOLY--

WHERE THE HELL'S THE PARAMEDIC!

--LOOK!

IT'S HIM!

I KNOW, IT'S WHAT THE REPORTS--

EVERYBODY THAT DOESN'T NEED TO BE HERE, BACK UP!

LET ME THROUGH!

HAVE TO STABILIZE HIM--
LOOKS LIKE HE'S BEEN IN A SHREDDER--
GET THE OXYGEN STANDING BY--
HAVE TO IMMOBILIZE HIM OR RISK--
SOMEBODY GET HIS MASK OFF--
I'LL DO IT.
I ALWAYS WONDERED WHO HE WAS INSIDE TH--
I DON'T THINK THAT'S A--
HE COULD BE CHOKING TO DEATH ON HIS OWN BLOOD! NOW GET HIS DAMNED MASK OFF!
OH JEEZ...
I THINK I'M GONNA BE SICK.

WHOEVER HE *WAS*...WHATEVER HIS NAME *USED* TO BE, HE'S *NOT*. NOT ANYMORE.

NOBODY COULD PICK THAT FACE OUT OF A LINE-UP.

NOBODY.

THE NAME IS GONE.

THE MAN IS GONE.

EMS

EMS

THE MAN IS GONE.

ONLY THE SPIDER REMAINS.

DPSFSDWRESD DDG..DGSLKDWE CVJAFLKJSASSA SDKFJADWETURA ADKASDAKSA.

CODE BLUE! CODE BLUE!

STANDING BY TO RECEIVE--

WE'RE LOSING HIM--

CLEAR THE WAY! GET OUT OF THE--

DPSFSDWRESD DDGJDGSLKDWE CVJAFLKJSASSA SDKFJADWE"LRA ADKASDAKSA.

CONFIRM MULTIPLE RIBS BROKEN--

BONE PENETRATED PATIENT'S LEFT LUNG, COLLAPSING IT, FILLING WITH FLUID--

PULSE IRREGULAR--

ARTERIAL TEAR AT UPPER VENA CAVA--

CONCUSSION, HEAVY INTRACRANIAL BLEEDING--

DPSFSDWRESD DDSJDGSLKDWE CVJAFLKJSASSA SDKFJADWETURA ADKASDAKSA.

...ANY WAY TO NOTIFY HIS NEXT OF KIN...BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE FOR GOODBYES...?

"DON'T WORRY, WITH THIS ALL OVER THE TELEVISION...

"...WHOEVER THEY ARE... THEY KNOW.

"THEY KNOW.

"THEY KNOW."

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, I DON'T CARE *WHO* YOU ARE, OR *WHAT* AUTHORITY YOU HAVE, YOU CAN *NOT* REMOVE A PATIENT FROM THIS HOSPITAL WITHOUT WRITTEN CONSENT FROM THE NEXT OF KIN.

IT'S FOR HIS OWN SAFETY--

THE PATIENT HAS BEEN MOVED TO ICU. HE'S IN *CRITICAL CONDITION.* IF HE'S MOVED AGAIN THE RESULTS WILL BE PREMATURELY FATAL.

WHAMM!

GO! HE'S PROBABLY ON ONE OF THE UPPER FLOORS! I'LL JOIN THE OTHERS, THEY'LL PROBABLY NEED A LAWYER RIGHT ABOUT NOW.

I'M COMING, PETER... I'M COMING... HOLD ON FOR ME, BABY...HOLD ON FOR ME...

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN... *PREMATURELY* FATAL?"

AS I SAID, THEY'VE ISOLATED AND TEMPORARILY STABILIZED THE PATIENT, BUT...

...I'M AFRAID THERE'S NOTHING MORE THEY CAN DO. NOTHING *ANYONE* CAN DO. THE DAMAGE WAS TOO EXTENSIVE.

"HE'S NOT GOING TO MAKE IT."

NOW...WE CAN AT LAST FINISH THIS.

THE CONSUMMATION... OF CONSUMPTION. TO TAKE ALL YOUR STRENGTH... ALL YOUR POWER...ALL YOU ARE...ALL YOU HAVE EVER BEEN...

...AND ALL YOU WOULD EVER HAVE BECOME...FOR MY OWN.

LEAVE HIM ALONE!

UNNHHH!

IF YOU WISH TO BE WITH HIM--

--I AM HAPPY TO OBLIGE.

A LITTLE SOMETHING TO CLEAR THE PALATE, AS THEY SAY...

THE MAN IS GONE.

ONLY THE SPIDER REMAINS.

BUT THE SPIDER REMEMBERS.

"I'LL ALWAYS BE THERE FOR YOU, MJ. EVEN IF I'M STANDING ON THE EDGE OF HELL ITSELF, IF I KNOW YOU NEED ME, I'LL COME FOR YOU. I SWEAR IT.

"I SWEAR IT."

EVEN DYING, THE SPIDER KNOWS WHEN TO GO DORMANT. WHEN TO CONSERVE ITS STRENGTH FOR ONE LAST MOVE.

WHEN TO SPEND ITS LAST BREATH.

SNAP!

WHEN...IT IS TIME.

BLESSED AND BURDENED HE WAS, WITH THE LEGACY OF THE SPIDER. THE GIFTS HE WOULD RECOGNIZE AND ACCEPT.

AND THE ONES HE REFUSED TO ACCEPT.

FOR SPIDERS DO NOT JUST LEAP, AND CLIMB, WITH GREAT STRENGTH.

WHEN CORNERED, WHEN DEATH LOOMS, THEY BITE. AND THEY STING.

NOW IS THE MOMENT OF CORNERED DEATH.

NOW IS THE PROMISE.

now.

now.

now.

AAAAHGGG!

SSSHHHAAA!

P...PETER...?

NOW, THE SPIDER FINDS ITSELF AT LAST.

IT STINGS.

SHLKKK!

IT STRIKES WITH THE FURY OF VENGEANCE INCARNATE. THE POWER OF THE SPIDER FULLY UNLEASHED FOR THE FIRST TIME.

AAGGHHH!

IT STINGS AGAIN.

AND WHEN THE SPIDER BITES... WHEN THE SPIDER *FEEDS*...

...IT ALWAYS STARTS AT THE HEAD.

HUCCHHH...

OHMYGOD... OHMYGOD...

EEEEEEEEEEEE!

EEEEEEEEEEE!

WHAT THE--

17-B. IS THAT HIS ROOM?

I--

YES! IS IT?

17B

STAIRS

NO TIME FOR THE ELEVATOR! HOLD ON!

WHOOOA!

NO...
NO...

...THIS WAS NOT...HOW IT WAS MEANT TO BE...THIS IS NOT...THIS IS NOT--

...SSSSHHH...

AAAGGGHHH!

PETER...?

PETER!

PETER... I'M HERE... I'M HERE, PETER.

I'M HERE, PETER...DON'T LEAVE ME LIKE THIS...I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT YOU... PLEASE...

...MJ...

PETER... YOU'RE GOING TO BE OKAY. JUST HOLD ON, HELP'S ON THE--

...NO... LISTEN TO ME...

...I'M OUT OF TIME, I'M... I'M ALL BROKEN UP...

NO, WE CAN FIX IT, WE CAN--

NO...NOT THIS TIME...I CAN FEEL IT.

BUT I CAN'T GO...WITHOUT SAYING...I LOVE YOU...ONE LAST TIME.

NO...

...BE HAPPY, MJ...DON'T GIVE UP...LIVE...FOR ME...

I CAN'T--

...PLEASE...

I CAN'T SAY GOODBYE, PETER...PLEASE, PLEASE DON'T MAKE ME...

...MJ...

DON'T... I LOVE YOU...I LOVE YOU...DON'T GO...PLEASE...

...GOODBYE.

NOOOO!

FOR THE NEXT HOUR, THEY SAY SOFT THINGS TO HER...THEY TELL HER THAT HE DIED BRAVELY...THAT HE SAVED HER BECAUSE HE WANTED HER TO LIVE ON AFTER HIM.

THE REST IS A BLUR OF SOUND. NONE OF THE WORDS SEEM TO LINE UP.

I DON'T CARE IF THEY COMPLAIN. TELL THEM TO SEND ME A BILL.

THEY SAY SOMETHING ABOUT MOVING HIM...ABOUT MOVING THE BODY...OUT OF THE HOSPITAL.

NO ONE CAN KNOW WHAT HAPPENED.

THAT SPIDER-MAN IS DEAD.

NO ONE CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION TO TAKE FINGERPRINTS, OR DENTAL RECORDS.

THEY CANNOT ALLOW ANYTHING TO COME BACK TO HER, OR TO PETER'S AUNT.

THEY KNOW WHAT TO DO. BECAUSE THEY HAVE DONE IT BEFORE. ALL OF THEM.

ALL OF THEM.

BUT AS SHE SURVEYS THE FORM THAT LIES MOTIONLESS ON THE GURNEY BEFORE HER, SHE KNOWS ONLY TWO THINGS.

THAT NONE OF THE WORDS MATTER.

NONE OF THEM.

AND THAT SHE WILL SPEND THE REST OF HER LIFE TURNING TO SAY SOMETHING TO THE ONE PERSON WHO MEANS MORE TO HER THAN LIFE ITSELF... WHO IS NO LONGER THERE.

BECAUSE THE MAN SHE LOVES IS DEAD.

THE MAN SHE LOVES IS DEAD.

TO BE CONTINUED
IN MARVEL KNIGHTS SPIDER-MAN#21

MARVEL KNIGHTS 21

THE TORMENTER™

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 8 OF 12

MARVEL KNIGHTS® SPIDER-MAN®

J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI • PAT LEE

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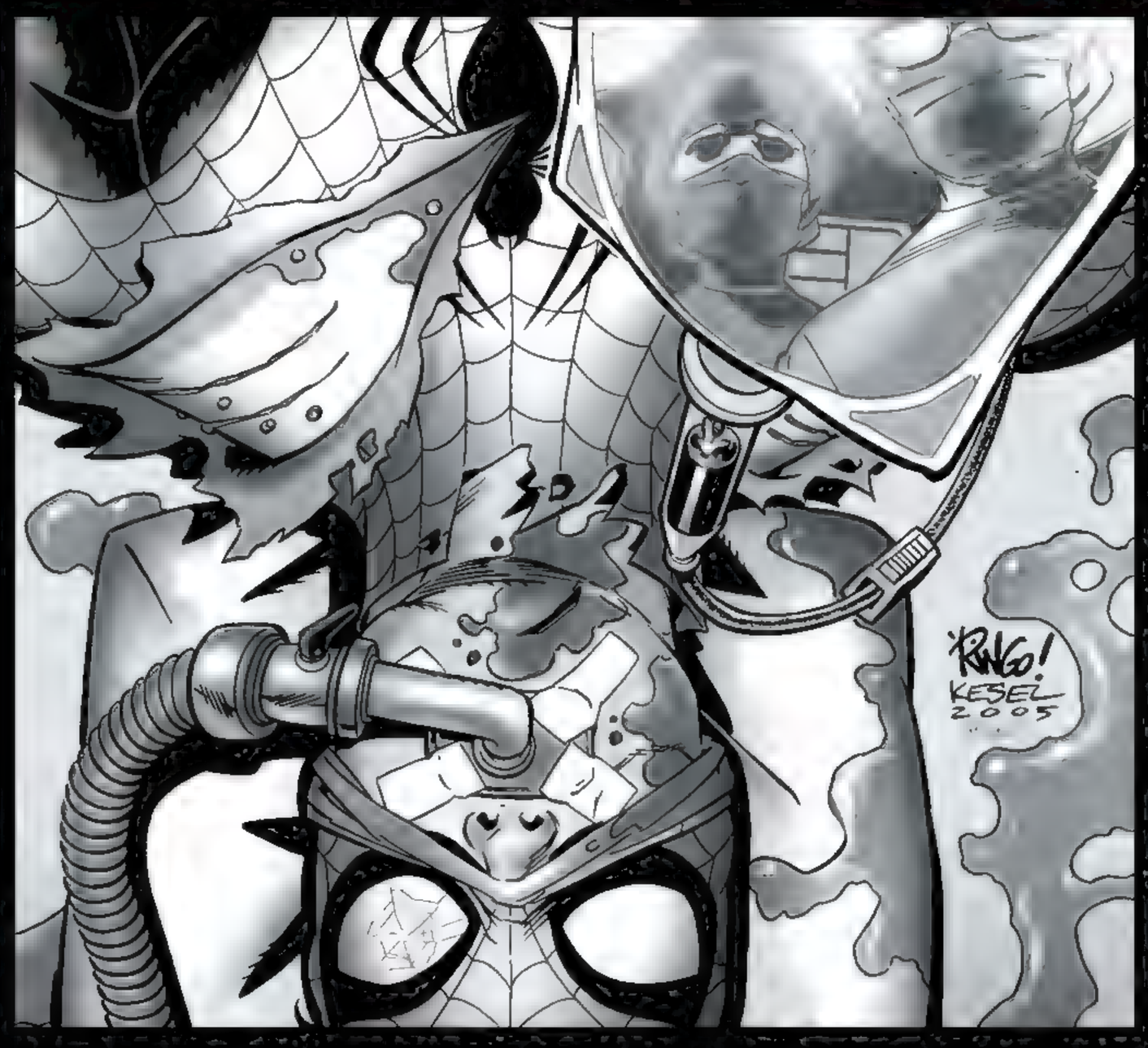
THE OTHER

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 2 OF 12

PREVIOUSLY IN

Friendly Neighborhood SPIDER-MAN #3



Spider-Man is dead.

After a vicious battle with Morlun, the webslinger was beaten, bloody, and missing an eye. It appeared as if the vampiric hunter, who had slain "spider-men" for centuries, had prevailed yet again.

But when Morlun attempted to feed on the vanquished hero, Mary Jane interceded and soon found her own life in mortal danger. Sensing that his wife needed him, Spider-Man reanimated in a burst of fury and unleashed the full force of his animalistic rage upon Morlun. The predator suddenly became the prey, and Morlun perished—his life force consumed, his body dissipating into dust.

But Spider-Man spent his last ounce of energy in the attack. While Mary Jane held tight, he slipped away into the dark void...

"AFTERMATH"

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SHE COMES UP IN THE ELEVATOR ALONE. SHE HAS TO.

SHE THREW UP TWICE ON THE WAY HERE FROM THE HOSPITAL, AND SHE'S NOT SURE SHE'S FINISHED YET.

SHE CAN'T LET THE OTHERS SEE HER LIKE THAT.

SHE HAS TO BE STRONG NOW. STRONG FOR HERSELF--

--AND FOR MAY.

MARY JANE...

AUNT MAY, I--

IS IT TRUE?

THEY SAID... THEY SAID SOMETHING HAPPENED TO PETER, AND...

BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO...I DECIDED I WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT UNTIL I HEARD IT FROM YOU, BECAUSE...BECAUSE YOU WERE *THERE*... AND...AND...

I'M--

TELL ME IT ISN'T TRUE, MARY JANE. TELL ME...IT WAS A MISTAKE, AND HE'S ALL RIGHT AND--

I CAN'T--

SPIDER-MAN: THE OTHER - EVOLVE OR DIE PART EIGHT:

AFTERMATH

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BUT THIS ISN'T...THIS ISN'T THE WAY IT'S SUPPOSED TO *HAPPEN*...HE WAS SUPPOSED TO OUTLIVE ME, NOT...

IT'S NOT *RIGHT*...IT'S JUST...

...IT'S NOT RIGHT...

I KNOW...I KNOW...

AND THEN THERE ARE NO WORDS.

JUST THE SOBBING.

AND THE EMPTINESS.

UNTIL, FINALLY...

MAY...MAY, I...I HAVE TO GO, THEY...

...THEY NEED ME TO...WE HAVE TO TALK, TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO, NOW THAT...

I HAVE TO GO.

I KNOW...

I'M SORRY...

WHERE...

"THERE'S...A ROOM UPSTAIRS...SOMEWHERE. TONY KEEPS IT FOR...

"...FOR TIMES LIKE THESE.

"I'LL BE BACK...AS SOON AS I CAN."

MJ...

I'M SO SORRY--

I KNOW--

IS SHE IN THERE?

YEAH... YEAH, SHE'S IN THERE.

I THOUGHT I MIGHT...I MEAN, IF YOU THINK IT WOULD DO ANY GOOD--

I THINK... IT WOULD BE GREAT IF YOU TALKED TO HER, STEVE. SHE RESPECTS YOU, AND I KNOW THAT PETER REALLY...

IT WOULD BE GREAT, THANK YOU.

I'M SORRY, MJ...I'M SO SORRY.

I KNOW...

AND SHE THINKS...

JUST KEEP MOVING...JUST KEEP PUTTING ONE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER...DO WHAT'S IN FRONT OF YOU AND MOVE ON TO THE NEXT THING...

DON'T THINK ABOUT IT... JUST DO IT.

JUST DO IT...

I KNOW THIS IS THE WORST POSSIBLE TIME, BUT THERE ARE SOME DECISIONS THAT HAVE TO BE MADE, AND MADE QUICKLY.

IS THIS ABOUT THE FUNERAL, TONY, OR--

NO. THOSE DECISIONS CAN WAIT. THESE CAN'T.

YOU SEE, SOME OF US WORK IN THE OPEN, AND SOME OF US WEAR MASKS, SO WHEN SOMETHING... HAPPENS...THERE ARE DIFFERENT... COMPLICATIONS.

FOR THOSE WHO WEAR THE MASKS, STEPS MUST BE TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT THEIR SECRET IS MAINTAINED EVEN AFTER THEY'RE... GONE...TO PROTECT THEIR FAMILIES FROM ENEMIES WHO MIGHT DECIDE TO STRIKE AT THEM AS A KIND OF CONSOLATION PRIZE.

THERE'S A WINDOW IN THE NEXT SEVERAL HOURS WHERE WE CAN MAKE CERTAIN... MODIFICATIONS... TO HIS...

...CONDITION...

...THAT WILL HELP US DISGUISE WHAT HAPPENED. I HAVE THE EQUIPMENT AND...

...I'VE DONE IT BEFORE.

CAN'T WE JUST SAY HE WAS IN A CAR ACCIDENT, OR--

I'M AFRAID NOT. THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT HAPPENS TO A BODY WHEN IT HITS SOMETHING, AND WHEN SOMETHING HITS IT. THE TECHNICAL TERM FOR THIS IS *COUP CONTRA COUP*, FORCE AGAINST FORCE.

IN HIS CURRENT STATE, THERE WOULD BE NO QUESTION THAT PETER...

...THAT HE WAS BEATEN TO DEATH.

I'M SORRY...

I KNOW...

SO WHAT... WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

"THE SIMPLEST OPTION IS TO MAKE THE BODY DISAPPEAR... SAY THERE WAS A BOATING ACCIDENT OF SOME SORT.

"UNFORTUNATELY, IF THERE'S A LIFE INSURANCE POLICY, THEY OFTEN WON'T PAY UNLESS THERE'S PROOF OF DEATH.

"OPTION TWO IS A VARIATION OF OPTION ONE, WHERE WE MODIFY THE INJURIES TO LOOK AS THOUGH THEY WERE CAUSED BY A SHIP'S PROPELLOR. THIS PROVIDES A BODY BUT INTRODUCES THE RISK THAT SOME OF THE WOUNDS WILL BE SUFFICIENTLY AMBIGUOUS TO TRIGGER A MORE FORMAL AUTOPSY.

"OPTION THREE IS A FIRE OF SUFFICIENT HEAT TO BURN AWAY ANY DEFENSIVE WOUNDS ON THE SKIN. WE'D HAVE TO ARRANGE FOR SOME DEBRIS TO CRUSH PARTS OF THE BODY IN ORDER TO JUSTIFY THE SHATTERED BONES.

"CREATING CIRCUMSTANCES TO EXPLAIN THE EYE INJURY WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT TO ACCOMPLISH, BUT I'M SURE WE'LL FIGURE OUT SOMETHING."

OGOD...

--HUCCCH--

--HUNH-HUNH--

--HUCCCCHHHHHH--

HI, LISTEN, I HEARD WHAT HAPPENED AND I JUST WANTED TO--

NO...

...I DON'T WANT TO HEAR *ANYTHING* FROM YOU, *UNDERSTAND?* AFTER ALL THE THINGS YOU SAID ABOUT *HIM*, ABOUT *ME*, THERE'S *NOTHING* THAT YOU CAN SAY THAT I WANT TO HEAR!

NOTHING!

I JUST WANTED TO SAY... NOW THAT HE'S...THAT IS, IF YOU WANTED TO GO OUT SOMETIME--

YOU BASTARD!

STAY AWAY FROM ME OR I'LL KILL YOU. I SWEAR, I'LL FIND A WAY AND I'LL KILL YOU!

YOU **KNOW** WHAT SHE'S GOING THROUGH, YOU **KNOW** WHAT SHE'S FEELING. WHY ON EARTH WOULD YOU--

THAT'S JUST IT, JARV. I **DO** KNOW.

SHE'S IN PAIN. SHE NEEDS SOMETHING TO STRIKE OUT AT, SOMETHING TO HELP HER MOVE FROM GRIEF TO RAGE.

BECAUSE RAGE KEEPS YOU MOVING. ALL GRIEF DOES IS MAKE YOU WANT TO DIE RIGHT ALONGSIDE THE PERSON YOU LOST. RAGE GIVES YOU A REASON TO LIVE.

SHE NEEDED SOMETHING, SOMEONE TO HIT. SO I GAVE IT TO HER.

SEEMED LIKE THE LEAST I COULD DO.

AND IF SHE HATES ME...WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE SHE'S GONNA BE HANGING AROUND ANYMORE NOW THAT HE'S GONE.

LET HER STAY UP NIGHTS TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO HURT ME...

...IT'LL GIVE HER SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR.

MAYBE THAT'S CRUEL.

BUT IT'S ALWAYS WORKED FOR ME.

MJ? ARE YOU--

I'M...I'M FINE, TONY, I JUST--

I'M FINE.

AND I'VE MADE MY DECISION.

I LOVE PETER TOO MUCH TO LET HIS DEATH BE JUST SOME KIND OF STUPID ACCIDENT. HE WAS A HERO. HE WAS MY HERO. AND THAT'S HOW I WANT EVERYONE TO REMEMBER HIM.

WE WERE WALKING DOWN A STREET WHEN FIVE GUYS CAME OUT AT US. THEY TRIED TO GRAB ME. PETER JUMPED AT THEM AND--

--AND HE TOLD ME TO RUN, TO GET HELP. BUT I COULDN'T FIND ANYONE, AND BY THE TIME I GOT BACK--

--HE WAS GONE.

SO DON'T... DO...ANYTHING ELSE TO HIM, HE'S SUFFERED ENOUGH. I'LL MAKE THE CALL WHENEVER YOU WANT, AND...AND SINCE HE WENT MISSING, TIME CAN PASS, AND THAT'LL HELP TO EXPLAIN...

...THE RIGOR MORTIS, BECAUSE BY THEN, HE'LL BE--

THAT'LL BE FINE, MARY JANE, I--

--I MEAN, IT'LL EXPLAIN A LOT OF...A LOT OF...

THE MASK WASN'T THE HERO, TONY. PETER WAS THE HERO *BEFORE* THE MASK AND *UNDER* THE MASK.

I WANT EVERYONE TO *KNOW* THAT: HIS FRIENDS, STRANGERS, EVEN THE PEOPLE WHO NEVER LIKED HIM.

ESPECIALLY THEM.

CAN YOU DO THAT, TONY?

YEAH...YEAH, WE CAN DO THAT, MJ.

I'LL SET IT UP FOR TOMORROW, TO SEPARATE IT FROM WHAT HAPPENED TODAY. I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN WE'RE READY FOR YOU.

GOOD... THANK YOU. BUT NOW I...I REALLY HAVE TO GO, TONY.

"BECAUSE IF YOU DON'T NEED ME ANYMORE, THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE WHO DOES."

YOU'RE UP LATE.

JESSICA... YEAH, I JUST...I COULDN'T SLEEP. TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER SLEEP AGAIN.

YOU WILL. IN TIME. MAYBE NOT TOMORROW, OR THE DAY AFTER, BUT... IN TIME.

HOW'S MAY HOLDING UP?

NOT GOOD. I MEAN...SHE'S SHATTERED. TONY GAVE HER SOMETHING TO HELP HER REST, GIVE HER HEART A BREAK FROM THE STRESS, OTHERWISE...

NO...I DON'T EVEN WANT TO *THINK* ABOUT LOSING BOTH OF THEM.

YOU WON'T. SHE'S STRONG. I'VE NEVER *SEEN* A FAMILY AS STRONG AS YOURS.

IT'S STRANGE, WHEN PETER WAS...GOING DOWN... IT WAS AS IF I COULD *FEEL* IT. I KNOW THAT OUR POWERS HAVE SIMILAR ROOTS, WE'RE BOTH BASED ON THE SPIDER, BUT I NEVER FELT THAT...*CONNECTED* BEFORE. IT WAS LIKE--

I DON'T KNOW, I CAN'T DESCRIBE IT.

I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH.

THERE JUST... THERE AREN'T ANY WORDS. EVERY FEW MINUTES, I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING AND I'LL TURN TO TALK TO HIM...AND I HAVE TO REMIND MYSELF THAT HE'S NOT HERE ANYMORE.

TONY SAYS THAT'LL STOP AFTER A WHILE, BUT...I'M NOT SURE I *WANT* IT TO STOP...

"...BECAUSE THEN HE REALLY *WILL* BE GONE."

CRASH

CLICK!

WHOOOOP! WHOOOOP! WHOOOOP! WHOOOOP!

WHAT'S--

IT'S THE INTRUDER ALERT!

WHERE'S IT COMING FROM?

LAB SIX!

BUT THAT'S WHERE...

...PETER!

TONY, WHAT'S GOING ON, WE--

MJ...YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE.

WHAT HAPPENED?

JUST TURN AROUND AND--

LEAVE ME ALONE! I WANT TO SEE HIM! I WANT TO--

MJ, NO!

...OH MY GOD... OH, NO...NO, NO...

NO...
NO...
MJ--
IT'S OKAY, I'VE GOT HER.
JESSICA, GET HER TO THE LIVING QUARTERS, MAKE SURE SHE'S OKAY AND MAKE *DOUBLY* SURE SHE DOESN'T COME BACK HERE.
CONSIDER IT DONE.
I CHECKED ON MAY, MADE SURE SHE WAS ALL RIGHT. WHAT HAPPENED...
...HERE...?

WHAT KIND OF SICK...WHO'D *DO* SOMETHING LIKE THIS? AND HOW'D THEY *FIND* HIM?

I DON'T KNOW...

...I DON'T KNOW *WHO* IT WAS, OR *HOW* THEY GOT IN HERE, OR *WHY* THEY DID THIS...DESECRATION... BUT *WHOEVER* IT WAS, WE'RE GOING TO *FIND* THEM.

AND GOD HELP THEM WHEN WE DO.

STEVE, WE--

--WHAT IS IT? DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING?

MAYBE, BUT--

WHAT'VE YOU GOT?

THE WINDOW'S COMPLETELY SHATTERED, BUT THERE'S NOT MUCH GLASS ON THE FLOOR. MOST OF IT SEEMS TO HAVE FALLEN OUTSIDE.

YEAH, SO?

SO IT MEANS THE WINDOW WASN'T BROKEN BY SOMEBODY TRYING TO GET *IN*...IT WAS SHATTERED BY SOMEBODY TRYING TO GET *OUT*.

LUKE...CHECK EVERY WAY IN AND OUT OF HERE, SEE IF ANY OF THE DOORS HAVE BEEN RIGGED.

GOT IT.

I'LL RUN THE SECURITY CAMERAS, SEE IF THEY PICKED UP ANYTHING.

STEVE...THE SECURITY SYSTEM I PUT IN HERE IS DAMN NEAR FOOLPROOF. SO EITHER SOMEONE'S VERY SMART AND VERY DANGEROUS, OR--

OR...?

"THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT SPIDERS..."

...FOR INSTANCE, THAT THEY CAN BE FOUND IN WET, ROCKY ENVIRONMENTS LIKE THIS. WE TEND TO THINK OF THEM AS INDOOR CREATURES, OR LIVING IN WOODS, OR DIRT, OR--

MRS. ROSEN, BILLY TOOK MY JAR!

THERE'S PLENTY FOR EVERYONE, TIFFANY. EVERYONE, KEEP LOOKING FOR SAMPLES OF BEACH LIFE TO BRING BACK TO CLASS.

AS I WAS SAYING...WOLF, KATIPO, REDBACK AND RECLUSE SPIDERS SOMETIMES BUILD NESTS IN SAND OR UNDER STONES TO CATCH ANTS AND OTHER SAND-DWELLING INSECTS.

THEY ALSO LAY THEIR EGG SACS BENEATH OLD WOODEN BOARDS AND ROCK SHELVES.

NOW, WHAT YOU HAVE HERE IS VERY INTERESTING INDEED, BECAUSE SOMETHING ***ELSE*** NOT GENERALLY KNOWN ABOUT SPIDERS IS THAT SOME OF THEM-- SUCH AS THE RECLUSE AND THE ORBWEAVER SPIDERS-- CAN ACTUALLY SHED THEIR SKIN.

WHILE SOME SHED THEIR SKIN ANNUALLY, LEAVING BEHIND AN EMPTY HUSK, MOST SHED THEIR SKIN JUST ONCE IN A LIFETIME, USUALLY UNDER CONDITIONS OF--

MRS. ROSEN...?

YES, DAVIN?

I CAN'T ***FIND*** ANYTHING... ALL THE ***OTHER*** KIDS HAVE FOUND STUFF BUT I ***CAN'T***...I ***HATE*** THIS...

NOW, DAVIN, A BEACH LIKE THIS IS ***TEEMING*** WITH LIFE. IF YOU HAVEN'T FOUND ANYTHING, IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT LOOKING IN THE RIGHT ***PLACES.***

DARK, MOIST AREAS LIKE YOU'D FIND UNDER THAT BRIDGE, FOR INSTANCE, ARE THE *PERFECT* BREEDING GROUNDS FOR LIFE. SO WHY DON'T YOU CHECK THAT OUT?

OKAY...

BUT DON'T GO TOO FAR, STAY WHERE I CAN SEE YOU.

ALL RIGHT...

LOOK! LOOK! I FOUND A SEA-WORM!

THAT'S NOT A SEA-WORM, MIKE, THAT'S A SHOELACE.

NUH-UH! SEE? IT'S GOT EYES!

THOSE AREN'T EYES, MIKE, THAT'S MOLD....

GOTCHA!

AH-HAH!

SQUISH!

COOL, IT'S--

HUH?

AAGHH!

DAVIN? WHAT IS IT? ARE YOU OKAY?

HE'S JUST A SCAREDY-CAT, THAT'S ALL! SCAREDY-CAT, SCAREDY-CAT!

DID YOU SEE SOMETHING?

I...I THOUGHT I SAW...

SCAREDY-CAT... WHAT WAS IT, A MONSTER?

NOTHING...IT WAS NOTHING, OKAY?

ALL RIGHT, THEN, WE'RE DONE FOR NOW, EVERYBODY BACK ON THE BUS. NEXT STOP, THE ZOO!

YAAAY!

AS FOR *YOU*, MIKE, STOP TEASING DAVIN, AND REMEMBER...

...THERE *ARE* NO SUCH THINGS AS MONSTERS.

TO BE CONTINUED IN AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #527

MARVEL KNIGHTS SPIDER-MAN

SPIDER-MAN

THE OTHER

EVOLVE OR DIE

IN TWO WEEKS, IN *AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #527*, THE COCOON HATCHES! BUT WHO OR WHAT WILL EMERGE?

J. Michael Straczynski and Mike Deodato spin a tangled web in THE OTHER part 9.

IN THREE WEEKS, IN *FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-MAN #4*, A POWERFUL NEW FOE SURFACES FROM AN UNLIKELY SOURCE!

Peter David and Mike Wieringo create the next great villain in THE OTHER part 10.

AND RETURN HERE IN A MONTH FOR *MARVEL KNIGHTS SPIDER-MAN #22*, WHEN A CONFRONTATION OF EPIC PROPORTIONS ENSUES BETWEEN A HERO AND HIS POLAR OPPOSITE!

Reginald Hudlin and Pat Lee raise the stakes in the penultimate chapter of THE OTHER.

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THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®

THE SPIDER-MAN™

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 9 OF 12

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THE OTHER

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 9 OF 12

PREVIOUSLY IN MARVEL KNIGHTS SPIDER-MAN #21

Spider-Man is dead...or is he?

After a vicious battle with the enigmatic Morlun, the web-slinger was beaten, bloody, and missing an eye. But when Morlun attempted to deliver his final deathblow and literally "feed" on Spider-Man, Spidey reanimated in a burst of fury and unleashed the full force of his totemic powers. The predator suddenly became the prey, and Morlun perished—his life-force consumed, his body dissipating into dust.

The final effort ended Spider-Man's life as well...or so it seemed.

Something has now emerged from Peter Parker's cadaver, leaving behind a broken window in Avengers Tower and a hollow shell of a corpse. Now, whomever—or whatever—escaped has formed a cocoon in preparation for its next stage...

"EVOLUTION"

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ANY SIGN OF HIM?

NEGATIVE. GOING UP 48TH STREET FOR ANOTHER PASS.

COPY THAT.

HE SAID HE'S COMING AROUND FOR ANOTHER SWEEP.

STEVE, A GUY CAN'T GO LEAPING OUT OF A TWENTY-STORY WINDOW WITHOUT *SOME*BODY SEEING HIM.

WE DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS, LUKE. WHATEVER WAS IN THAT ROOM WITH PETER'S BODY...

IT COULD HAVE BEEN...IT COULD BE... ANYTHING.

WHAT IF...WHAT IF IT WAS PETER? WHAT IF--

MARY JANE, PETER'S...

PETER'S DEAD, MJ. YOU HAVE TO ACCEPT THAT.

DO I?

DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY TIMES HE'S BEEN PRESUMED DEAD? UNDER-ESTIMATED?

BURIED...?

HIS BODY IS IN THE OTHER ROOM, MJ.

IS IT...?

"WHATEVER *HAPPENED* TO PETER...

"...WHATEVER *IS* OR IS *NOT* IN THAT ROOM...

"...IT'S JUST A SHELL. WHAT I LOVED IN PETER WAS WHAT WAS *INSIDE*.

"AND *NOTHING* CAN KILL THAT.

"NOTHING..."

WAKE UP.

"WAKE UP."

AAAAGH!

IT BIT ME!

WHAT'S WRONG, PETER?

THE SPIDER! IT BIT ME!

DID YOU SEE WHERE THE SPIDER WENT?

OVER THERE!

BE CAREFUL...BE *CAREFUL!* DON'T LET HIM GET NEAR YOU!

HE'LL KILL YOU! HE KILLS *EVERYONE* WHO GETS CLOSE TO HIM!

EVERYONE!

LOOK OUT! STOP HIM!

SORRY, PAL, THAT'S YOUR JOB, I'M THROUGH BEING PUSHED AROUND... BY ANYONE.

FROM NOW ON, I JUST LOOK OUT FOR NUMBER ONE.

GOOD NIGHT, UNCLE BEN.

GOOD NIGHT, PETER.

GOOD-BYE.

SLASH!

LITTLE SPIDER...

...LITTLE MAN...

...DOESN'T UNDERSTAND.

NEVER UNDERSTOOD.

WHAT YOU WERE.

WHAT YOU ARE.

HUCCHHHH... HUCCCHHHH...

WHAT YOU ARE BECOMING.

YOU WERE BITTEN. THE VENOM WAS INSIDE YOU.

THE SPIDER... WAS INSIDE YOU.

BUT YOU COULDN'T FACE THAT...COULDN'T ACCEPT THAT...

AND WHAT DO WE DO WITH THOSE PARTS OF US WE CANNOT FACE, CANNOT ACCEPT?

WE TAKE THAT WHICH IS *INSIDE*... AND MOVE IT *OUTSIDE*... BECAUSE THEN IT IS *SAFE*.

I NEED SOME KIND OF COSTUME... SOMETHING THAT CAN STOP PEOPLE FROM SEEING MY FACE...

YOU COULD HAVE *CHOSEN* TO *CONCEAL* THE *SOURCE* OF YOUR *POWER*...AS MANY *DO*. ONLY *YOU* KNEW THE TRUTH.

YOU COULD HAVE CHOSEN A *THOUSAND* DIFFERENT NAMES...ALLOWING *THAT* NAME AND *THAT* FACE TO PROTECT THE *SECRET* OF WHAT YOU WERE *INSIDE*.

BUT YOU CHOSE OTHERWISE.

PERFECT. THAT'S *JUST* THE LOOK I WANT.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

THE *QUESTION*... IS *WHY*?

YOU DID IT...BECAUSE IT PUT THE SPIDER *OUTSIDE* YOU. THE *SPIDER*...WAS JUST...A PIECE OF *CLOTH*.

AN EMPTY HUSK, FROM WHICH YOU COULD EMERGE HUMAN, *NORMAL*, AS THOUGH THE *SPIDER* WAS NOT STILL INSIDE YOU.

PUTTING IT *ON*...MEANT THAT YOU COULD TAKE IT *OFF*.

BUT NOW... THE *SPIDER*... HAS TAKEN *YOU* OFF.

YOU ARE A FOOL.

YOU *CREATED* THE *GIFT* THAT YOU HAD BEEN *GIVEN* AS THOUGH IT WERE A *TOY*.

YOU DID NOT *LOOK* TOO *DEEPLY* INTO WHAT YOU HAD *BECOME* OR WHAT YOU COULD *DO*.

YOU COMMITTED THE *CRIME*...OF *SUPERFICIALITY*.

STRENGTH. SENSES. AGILITY. ADHESION. THE WEB.

THESE WERE THE SIMPLEST TOOLS WHICH YOU HAD BEEN GIVEN. THE ONES A *CHILD* WOULD FIND *EXCITING*...

...AND *STOP* BEFORE ANYTHING *MORE* EXCITING BUT ALSO MORE *DISTURBING* WAS DISCOVERED.

"THE *CHILD* NEVER *ASKED*... AND THE MAN NEVER *RETURNED* TO THE QUESTION--

"ONLY AT THE *END* DID THE *ANSWER* TO THAT QUESTION... BECOME *APPARENT*."

"--WHAT *HAPPENS* WHEN YOU *MERGE* A *MAN*...WITH A *SPIDER*?

YOU... WERE *DEAD*.

THE *SPIDER*... WAS *NOT*. THE *SPIDER*... *REFUSED* TO DIE.

"AND SO THE *SPIDER*...*FED*.

"IT *TOOK* FROM THE ONE...WHAT IT TRIED TO TAKE FROM THE *SPIDER*.

"AND THE SPIDER SLEPT...AND DREAMT... OF BEING A MAN..."

...AS THE MAN SLEPT...AND DREAMT...OF BEING A SPIDER...

"UNTIL AT LAST...THE SPIDER...AWOKE.

"AWOKE...TO BE REBORN...BUT THE QUESTION REMAINS..."

REBORN... AS WHAT?

AND PERHAPS JUST AS IMPORTANT...

...WHY?

WHAT EMERGES FROM THE HEALING...MAY BE MORE MAN THAN SPIDER...

"...OR MORE SPIDER THAN MAN.

"BECAUSE WHAT IS SUPPRESSED FOR TOO LONG...MUST SOONER OR LATER BECOME APPARENT... FOR ALL TO SEE.

"AND SEEN...WITH A VENGEANCE."

ONCE IN ITS LIFE...A SPIDER MAY SHED ITS SKIN... SHED ITS PAST...AND BEGIN ANEW.

EVERY WOUND, HEALED. EVERY INJURY, REPAIRED. EVERY MUSCLE, RENEWED. A LIFETIME OF PAIN... CLEANSED.

THIS...IS THE SECOND GIFT OF THE SPIDER.

ACCEPT US. ACCEPT WHO WE ARE. ACCEPT WHO YOU ARE.

THE MAN WHO DREAMED OF BEING A SPIDER... AND THE SPIDER WHO DREAMED OF BEING A MAN.

FIND WITHIN US THE GIFTS YOU DID NOT KNOW YOU POSSESSED...THE STRENGTHS YOU WERE AFRAID TO CALL YOUR OWN.

BE THE MAN YOU ARE...BUT NOW, AT LAST...EMBRACE THE OTHER.

BUT THIS TIME...THE SPIDER MUST NOT BE DENIED.

WE...THE VOICE OF EVOLUTION, THE WEAVERS OF THE WEB OF TIME...THE VOICE OF HISTORY, SPEAKING THROUGH YOU...MUST NOT BE SUPPRESSED AGAIN.

EMBRACE US.

NNNGGGGHH!

DO NOT STRUGGLE. THE PAIN YOU FEEL... IS THE AGONY--

"--OF BIRTH.

"BUT AS YOU GO, GIVEN THIS LAST CHANCE, REMEMBER ONE THING..."

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE READY FOR THIS, AUNT MAY? I CAN TELL THEM TO--

NO, MARY JANE...IT'S BEEN LONG ENOUGH.

FIVE DAYS...

THERE'S NO POINT TO LOOKING ANYMORE.

I DON'T WANT TO LET PETER GO, MARY JANE. I FEEL AS IF...IF I LET GO, I'LL JUST FALL... FOREVER.

BUT THEN I REMEMBER... THAT I HAVE YOU TO LOOK AFTER NOW. TO TAKE CARE OF.

JUST AS I LOOKED AFTER PETER...AFTER BEN WAS GONE...AND I THOUGHT MY WORLD WOULD END.

PETER GAVE ME A REASON TO LIVE. AND HE STILL DOES... BECAUSE YOU ARE IN MY LIFE, AND I AM IN YOURS.

I HOLD ONTO THAT EVERY DAY, MARY JANE. AND SO SHOULD YOU.

WE'RE... WE'RE READY. READY TO LET GO OF--

--THE BODY.

DO WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO WITH IT.

MARY JANE... MAY...I KNOW THIS HAS BEEN HARD FOR YOU, BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT ALL OF US...*ALL* OF US...WILL BE THERE IF YOU NEED US. AND YOU'RE WELCOME TO STAY FOR AS LONG AS--

DING!

--AS--

WHO...?

LOGAN? LOGAN, IS THAT--

...YOU?

OHGOD... OHGOD... OHGOD...

PETER...!

MJ... MAY... I'LL NEVER LEAVE YOU AGAIN.

NEVER.

NEVER.

NEVER.

"THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU HOPE FOR, BUT YOU NEVER DARE SPEAK OUT LOUD..."

...WHEN TONY AND I SAW WHAT HAPPENED, AND REALIZED THAT THE WINDOW HAD BEEN BROKEN FROM THE INSIDE-OUT, WE THOUGHT MAYBE--

--MAYBE THERE WAS SOME KIND OF REGENERATION PROCESS UNDERWAY, SINCE YOUR POWERS COME FROM A SPIDER, AND SPIDERS SHED THEIR SKIN ONCE IN A LIFETIME.

BUT WE DIDN'T...COULDN'T... SAY ANYTHING, IN CASE WE WERE WRONG, BECAUSE IF WE WERE...I DON'T KNOW IF THERE'S A WORD FOR SOMETHING THAT CRUEL.

I KNOW, I KNOW...

YOU DID THE RIGHT THING, STEVEN.

HEY.

HEY.

I MISSED YOU. I MISSED YOU SO MUCH.

I KNOW. I'M SORRY.

IF YOU *EVER* DIE ON ME AGAIN...I'LL KILL YOU.

DEAL.

SO, PETER...

...WHEN WE THOUGHT YOU WERE...GONE...WE DISPOSED OF ANYTHING THAT MIGHT COMPROMISE EITHER MAY OR MJ.

THAT'S HIS FANCY WAY OF SAYING WE DITCHED ALL YOUR SPIDER-GUY OUTFITS.

ALMOST ALL OF THEM.

WE WERE SAVING ONE FOR... WELL, FOR THE MEMORIAL.

YOU CAN HAVE THAT ONE BACK NOW.

ANYWAY, SINCE IT WAS MY CALL, I THOUGHT I'D MAKE UP FOR IT.

SO WHEN YOU'RE READY, I THOUGHT I MIGHT HELP YOU WITH A BIT OF A REDESIGN. I HAVE SOME IDEAS THAT YOU MIGHT FIND INTERESTING. I--

BOSS, IT'S A GREAT IDEA, AND I APPRECIATE IT, AND I JUST MAY TAKE YOU UP ON THAT...

BUT WITH ALL DUE RESPECT--

"--I'M TAKING THE REST OF THE NIGHT OFF."

"THE MAN DIED. THE SPIDER WAS REBORN.

"I...WAS REBORN.

"BUT AS YOU GO, GIVEN THIS LAST CHANCE, REMEMBER ONE THING...

"SO THE QUESTION IS...ARE YOU *YOU?*

"OR ARE YOU *ME?*

"ARE YOU THE MAN WHO DREAMED OF BEING A SPIDER?

"OR THE SPIDER WHO DREAMED OF BEING A MAN?

"ARE YOU THE ONE...

"...OR ARE YOU THE OTHER?"

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THE

THE

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 10 OF 12

PETER DAVID • MIKE WIERINGO

Friendly Neighborhood SPIDER-MAN®

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THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #527

THE OTHER

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 10 OF 12

PREVIOUSLY IN

After a vicious battle with the vampiric "spider-hunter" Morlun, Peter Parker, our friendly neighborhood Spider-Man, was beaten, bloodied, and missing an eye. But when Morlun attempted to deliver his final deathblow and literally "feed" on Spider-Man, Spidey reanimated in a burst of fury and unleashed the full force of his totemic powers. The predator suddenly became the prey, and Morlun perished--his life force consumed, his body dissipating into dust.

The final effort ended Spider-Man's life as well...or so it seemed. Something emerged from Peter Parker's cadaver, leaving behind a broken window in Avengers Tower and a hollow shell of a corpse. While this creature created a cocoon far away from the Tower, Peter Parker's spiritual journey led him to confront the spider within.

Now, renewed and reborn, Peter has reunited with his family and friends. But many questions about his sudden return still linger...

"PIRATE BOOTY"

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ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THESE TEST RESULTS?

TRIPLE-CHECKED THEM, MR. STARK.

I HAVE TO SAY, THIS IS IMPRESSIVE.

A SAFE ASSUMPTION.

ANYTHING I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT, TONY? I MEAN...I ASSUME IT INVOLVES ME.

REMEMBER THAT LINE FROM THE FIRST INDY JONES MOVIE? WHEN HE TAKES OFF HIS SHIRT AND HE'S COVERED WITH SCARS AND BRUISES, AND HE SAYS...

"IT'S NOT THE YEARS, IT'S THE MILEAGE?"

EXACTLY, YES.

WELL, ACCORDING TO OUR PRELIMINARY RESULTS...

...YOUR ODOMETER'S BEEN RESET.

SHEDDING YOUR SKIN WAS JUST THE BEGINNING. THIS IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BUG-RELATED METAMORPHOSIS SINCE GREGOR SAMSA.

I'M TURNING INTO A *COCKROACH?*

OH, YOU *GOT* THE REFERENCE. *GOOD.* AND NO, NOT QUITE.

THE INTERIOR SCARRING FROM YOUR OLD DUODENAL ULCER IS GONE. SO IS THE BULLET WOUND YOU SUSTAINED FROM TRACER.

ABRASIONS GOING BACK YEARS HAVE VANISHED. OBVIOUSLY YOUR EYE GREW BACK, BUT SO DID THE TONSILS YANKED WHEN YOU WERE FOUR.

YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS?

LOTS OF ICE CREAM IF THEY HAVE TO COME OUT AGAIN?

OH, BY THE WAY...

PIRATE BOOTY

PETER DAVID	MIKE WIERINGO	KARL KESEL	PAUL MOUNTS	VC'S CORY PETIT	MOLLY LAZER et AUBREY SITTERSON	ANDY SCHMIDT	TOM BREVOORT	AXEL ALONSO	JOE QUESADA	DAN BUCKLEY
WRITER	PENCILER	INKER	COLORS	LETTERER	ASSISTANT EDITORS	ASSOCIATE EDITOR	EDITOR	CONSULTING EDITOR	EDITOR IN CHIEF	PUBLISHER

...ARE WE ALMOST DONE? I'M GETTING KINDA CHILLY.

FINSTER, INCREASE THE THERMOSTAT FIVE DEGREES, WOULD YOU? MAKE OUR GUEST MORE COMFORTABLE.

THAT WOULD BE "NO," THEN, HUH?

WE'RE JUST TRYING TO BE THOROUGH. OH, AND FINSTER...SCHEDULE THE SUBJECT'S COLONOSCOPY, WOULD YOU?

MY *WHAT* NOW?

KIDDING.

YOU'RE A *RIOT*, STARK.

HEY, TONY.

HANK! REED! GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT.

YEAH, GUYS, PULL UP A CHAIR, THE SUPERBOWL'S ABOUT TO COME ON. DID YOU REMEMBER THE NACHOS?

I SEE THIS "REGENERATION" YOU DESCRIBED DIDN'T IMPROVE HIS SENSE OF HUMOR.

APPARENTLY NOT.

HOW DO YOU *FEEL*, SPIDER-MAN?

LIKE A DA VINCI PICTURE.

WELL, NOT THE *MONA LISA*, OBVIOUSLY.

AH. THE VITRUVIAN MAN.

SAY... VITRUVIAN MAN HAS EIGHT LIMBS.

MAYBE THIS VITRUVIAN GUY HAD HIS *OWN* SPIDER-THING GOING FOR HIM.

DOUBTFUL. IT WAS AN ANATOMY STUDY BASED ON THE WRITINGS OF MARCUS VITRUVIUS, A ROMAN ARCHITECT. HENCE "VITRUVIAN."

HAVE YOU RUN CELLULAR COMPARISONS TO THE ORIGINAL SKIN?

I HAVE PEOPLE WORKING ON THAT NOW, TAKING SAMPLES FROM ALL OVER.

SO VITRUVIUS WAS AN ARCHITECT. SO ARE SPIDERS. MAYBE...

I THINK YOU'RE REACHING A BIT, SON. SPIDERS AREN'T ARCHITECTS.

OH YEAH?

"YOU TRY BUILDING A WEB WITH NOTHING BUT WEBBING COMING OUT YOUR BACKSIDE.

"BY THE WAY, UH... I'M NOT, Y'KNOW... GOING TO BE, UHM..."

"EJECTING THREADS OUT YOUR POSTERIOR?"

"WELL... YEAH."

"NOT THAT ANY OF OUR TESTS HAVE DETERMINED, NO.

"THERE ARE SOME...ANOMALIES, TRUE. THEY'RE AMONG THE THINGS WE'RE INVESTIGATING.

"BUT NOTHING QUITE THAT RADICAL."

"GOOD. I'D HATE TO HAVE TO REDESIGN MY COSTUME TO INCLUDE A BUTT FLAP.

"FOR ONCE IN MY LIFE, I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT WORST-CASE SCENARIOS."

ALL RIGHT, EUGENE...DO YOU MIND IF I CALL YOU THAT?

ALMOST NOBODY DOES, BUT, HEY...YOU'RE THE PRINCIPAL. KNOCK YOURSELF OUT.

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I HAVE TO SAY, YOU HAVE AN IMPRESSIVE BACKGROUND.

THANKS.

CONSIDERABLE ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENT... SERVED IN THE ARMED FORCES...

WELL, I LOVE SPORTS AND MY COUNTRY, SO IT'S ALL GOOD.

BUT...

THERE'S A BUT?

...YOU'RE NOT AN ACCREDITED TEACHER. AND MY GREATER CONCERN IS...

...ACCORDING TO YOUR MEDICAL RECORDS, YOU WERE IN AN AUTO ACCIDENT THAT LEFT YOU IN A COMA--BRAIN DAMAGED.

OBVIOUSLY YOU'VE COME OUT OF THE COMA. BUT THIS ALLEGED "BRAIN DAMAGE" MIGHT HAVE...

MIGHT WHAT? MIGHT HAVE LEFT ME A PSYCHO OR A KID ABUSER OR SOMETHING?

TO BE HONEST... YES.

LOOK...I WON'T LIE TO YA. THERE'S WHOLE CHUNKS OF MY MEMORY GONE. PIECES OF MY LIFE ARE HOLES. *THAT'S* WHERE THE DAMAGE IS.

BUT I REMEMBER HOW TO TEACH KIDS TO *SLAM-DUNK*...TO THROW A HANGING *CURVE*...TO *DEFEND* THEMSELVES...

...WHICH, IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T LOOKED OUT YOUR WINDOW, THE KIDS IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD COULD STAND TO LEARN.

NO ARGUMENT.

AND, BY THE WAY, NO OFFENSE, BUT LOOKING AT YOUR SCHOOL ATHLETIC TROPHIES...

...YOUR TEAMS HAVE DONE SQUAT FOR YEARS. I CAN TURN THAT AROUND.

MAKE SOME KIDS REAL HAPPY. PARENTS, TOO.

GIMME A SHOT AT HELPING MY OLD SCHOOL, IS ALL I'M ASKING.

VERY WELL. A SHOT IT IS, EUGENE.

PLEASE... FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD...

...CALL ME *FLASH*. FLASH THOMPSON.

"FLASH" IT IS. AND YOU COME FROM ONE CONSCIENTIOUS GRADUATING CLASS, FLASH. ONE OF YOUR OLD CLASSMATES ALSO TEACHES HERE.

DO YOU REMEMBER PETER PARKER?

PUNY PARKER!? YOU'RE *KIDDIN'*!

I DON'T THINK I'VE SEEN HIM SINCE *HIGH SCHOOL!* BOY, *THIS'LL* BE A HOOT!

OH, HEY! LOGAN! I OWE YOU SOMETHING.

HUH?

WHAT, UH...WHAT'S *THAT* FOR?

PETER WAS DEAD, I WAS IN SHOCK, YOU MADE A PASS AT ME, AND I SMACKED YOU.

YEAAAHH...?

YOU KNEW I NEEDED TO GET ANGRY SO I COULD WORK *THROUGH* THE GRIEF. SO YOU MADE YOURSELF A TARGET. GAVE ME SOMETHING TO VENT AT.

YOU WERE DOING ME A FAVOR, AND I DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE IT. RIGHT?

PRETTY MUCH, YEAH. YOU MAD?

'COURSE NOT.

HOW'D YOU FIGURE IT OUT?

I REALIZED YOU WOULD NEVER *REALLY* HAVE HIT ON ME SINCE YOU MUST KNOW, DEEP DOWN, THAT I'D RATHER CUT OFF MY HEAD THAN *EVER* GO OUT WITH YOU.

AH. GOT IT.

THANKS AGAIN.

NOT A PROBL--

WAIT...WAS THAT A COMPLIMENT OR A DIS?

WHO CAN *TELL* WITH YOUNG PEOPLE THESE DAYS?

THIS IS EXCELLENT WORK SO FAR.

BUT WE'VE BARELY SCRATCHED THE SURFACE. THERE'S STILL SO MUCH WE DON'T KNOW.

PARTICULARLY WHEN IT COMES TO DETERMINING WHAT TRIGGERED THE TRANSFORMATION.

SOME SPIDERS CAN SHED THEIR SKIN ONCE IN A LIFETIME...BUT WHY NOW AT THIS PARTICULAR POINT?

WE'LL GET IT SORTED OUT, I'M SURE. WELL, I'M OUTTA HERE.

"OUTTA HERE?" PETER, THERE'S MUCH MORE WORK TO DO...

PLUS I WANTED TO GO OVER THOSE COSTUME REDESIGNS WITH YOU.

THEY CAN WAIT.

I'M NOT CERTAIN THEY CAN.

THERE'S STILL TOO MANY QUEST--

WHAT IN THE WORLD--?!

OOOOFFFF!!!!

PETER!

HOLY...

HOW ABOUT I PUT ON MY ARMOR AND YOU TAKE ANOTHER TRY AT THAT.

I'M SO SORRY! IT WAS...

IT WAS *COMPLETELY* INSTINCT.

THIS IS RELATED TO YOUR *SPIDER-SENSE*, YES?

RIGHT! USUALLY IT ONLY GOES OFF WHEN THERE'S DANGER.

THIS TIME, THOUGH, THE SUDDEN MOVEMENT ALONE MADE ME THINK I WAS UNDER ATTACK, AND MY BODY JUST...REACTED.

"YOU OKAY, TONY?" "HE HURT YOU, TONY?"

HOW DID YOU FEEL WHILE IN MOTION?

IT WAS LIKE...YOU KNOW HOW A BALLPLAYER HAS A HEAVY "DONUT" ON HIS BAT FOR HIS ON-DECK SWINGS, SO HE CAN SWING THE BAT FASTER WHEN HE'S UP?

IT'S LIKE MY WHOLE LIFE I'D BEEN WEIGHED DOWN BY METAL DONUTS, AND WAS FINALLY MOVING AT FULL SPEED.

A LITTLE *ATTENTION*, IS ALL I'M SAYING.

EXCUSE ME, GENTLEMEN...

...I BELIEVE IT'S TIME TO LET MY NEPHEW COME OUT AND *PLAY*.

MRS. PARKER, I'M AFRAID THERE ARE MORE TESTS...

WE'RE ONLY CONCERNED ABOUT HIS SAFETY...

PLUS, FROM A SCIENTIFIC STANDPOINT, THIS IS A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO--

ANTHONY. HENRY. DOCTOR RICHARDS.

LIFE IS PRECIOUS. PETER'S BEEN GIVEN A GIFT OF A SECOND LIFE.

DO ANY OF YOU THINK HE DOESN'T DESERVE SOME TIME TO GO OUT AND ENJOY IT?

WELL? *ANY* OF YOU?

NO.

NO, MA'AM.

BY THE WAY, THAT'S A *LOVELY* OUTFIT, MRS. PARKER.

GO PLAY, PETER.

YES, MA'AM.

...I'M GOING TO THANK THE ONE WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR DETERMINING THE WHEN, WHERE AND WHY.

GOOD DAY.

AND *THANK* YOU, DOCTOR RICHARDS. ACTUALLY, I'M OFF TO CHURCH. WHILE YOU BOYS ARE BUSY DETERMINING *HOW* IT WAS THAT PETER CAME BACK TO LIFE...

WHY DOES SHE CALL *YOU* "DOCTOR"? *I'M* A DOCTOR, TOO...

OH, PLEASE.

SERIOUSLY, REED. "WHAT A LOVELY OUTFIT?" YOU SOUNDED LIKE EDDIE HASKELL.

I HAVE *NO* IDEA WHO THAT IS.

THIS IS TOO SLOW.

TOO SLOW? WHAT DO YOU MEA--

WHOAAHAAHHAAA!!

AND WHERE ARE YOU TWO OFF TO?

SOME FUN.

WHAT KIND...DARE I ASK?

PETER SAID HE WAS GOING TO GIVE ME A RIDE!

YEAH. I BET HE IS.

LUKE! GET YOUR MIND OUT OF THE GUTTER.

C'MON, JESS. DUDE SAID HE'S GOING TO GIVE HER A *RIDE*. WHAT ELSE COULD THEY *POSSIBLY* BE TALKING ABOUT EXCEPT, Y'KNOW, MAKIN'--

WHOOOPEEEEE!!

"MJ...THERE'S STUFF I THINK WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT."

"YEEEEEEHAHAHAHAAAA! THIS IS SOOOOO COOL!"

"I KNOW IT IS, HON'...BUT I FEEL LIKE WE'VE GOTTA CLEAR THE AIR, BEFORE WE GET WRAPPED UP IN OTHER THINGS."

"OKAY, OKAY..."

"I MEAN, BELIEVE ME...I KNOW HOW IT CAN BE. HOW THINGS CAN JUST, Y'KNOW...CRAWL INTO YOU, GET INSIDE YOU, AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT...

"...THEY CAN JUST EAT AWAY AT YOU UNTIL THERE'S NOTHING LEFT."

IT'S JUST THAT...I THOUGHT YOU'D COME TO TERMS WITH ME DOING WHAT I DO...

...AND THE NEXT THING I KNEW, YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT ME WANTING TO DIE, AND SURVIVOR'S GUILT...AND LIKE YOU WEREN'T COOL WITH IT AT ALL.

I KNOW.

SO...SO WHICH *IS* IT?

A LITTLE OF BOTH.

AW, C'MON, MJ...

HEY, *YOU* C'MON! YOU WERE GIVING OFF THIS WHOLE "I'M GOING TO DIE" VIBE, AND I KINDA PICKED UP ON THAT, AND IT JUST SET ME THINKING, THAT'S ALL.

WHEN YOU GET DOWN TO IT... IT WAS MORE ABOUT ME THAN YOU.

I'M NOT FOLLOWING.

WELL, IT'S...

UH-OH.

I SEE IT.

DOWN THERE.

I KNOW, I'M ON IT. SO ANYWAY... MORE ABOUT YOU THAN ME.

IT'S JUST...IT WAS ONE THING WHEN YOU WERE OFF DOING YOUR SPIDER-MAN THING AND I HAD A LIFE OUTSIDE OF IT ALL. A HOUSE, FRIENDS, ALL THAT STUFF.

NOW WE'RE LIVING IN AVENGERS HQ, AND ALL MY FRIENDS ARE SUPERGUYS.

I FIGURED, TO THEM I'M "MRS. SPIDER-MAN." I'VE NO IDENTITY OF MY OWN ANYMORE. I FELT KIND OF PATHETIC. AND, WORSE... THIS IS GONNA SOUND TERRIBLE...

I THOUGHT, IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO YOU...HOW COULD I SURVIVE IT? I'D LOSE MY HUSBAND...THE WORLD I WAS LIVING IN... EVERYTHING.

I'D BE LEFT WITH NOTHING. I'D *BE* NOTHING.

AND I FELT LOUSY THINKING THAT WAY, BUT I COULDN'T HELP IT.

IT'S OKAY...

IT'S *NOT* OKAY. YOU'VE *NO* IDEA WHAT IT'S LIKE, FEELING SELFISH WHILE BEING MARRIED TO THE MOST *UNSELFISH* GUY ON THE PLANET.

OKAY, YOU HAVE ME THERE.

ANYWAY...I WASN'T REALLY MAD AT YOU. I WAS MAD AT ME FOR BEING SCARED AND SELFISH.

I'M AN ACTRESS. I ACTED THAT WAY. TA-DAHHH.

SURE *FELT* LIKE YOU WERE MAD AT ME.

AND DO YOU STILL FEEL THAT WAY?

NO. NOT ANYMORE.

HOW COME?

BECAUSE YOU *DIED*, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE.

YOU DIED, AND I LIVED MY GREATEST FEAR. AND YOU KNOW WHAT?

I WAS SURVIVING IT.

DON'T GET ME WRONG: YOUR COMING BACK WAS A MIRACLE THAT I WILL BE THANKFUL FOR TO THE END OF MY DAYS.

BUT IF YOU HADN'T...I REALIZE NOW THAT I WOULD HAVE MADE IT THROUGH.

WITH THE HELP OF THE GUYS WHO MADE ME FEEL LIKE MARY JANE AND NOT "MRS. SPIDER-MAN"...AND WITH MY OWN INNER STRENGTH...

I WOULD'VE BEEN THERE FOR AUNT MAY. AND FOR MYSELF. AND LIFE WOULD'VE GONE ON.

DON'T TAKE THIS WRONG, BUT... IN SOME WAYS, YOUR DYING WAS THE BEST THING THAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO ME.

I'M NOT SURE THERE'S A *RIGHT* WAY TO TAKE THAT.

YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

HARDLY *EVER.*

COULD YOU BOTTOM-LINE IT FOR ME?

THE BOTTOM LINE IS: I LOVE YOU. I'M NEVER LEAVING YOU. I SUPPORT YOU. AND I'M PROUD TO BE YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-WIFE. HOW'S THAT?

THAT'S...

ARRHHHHHHH!!

WHAT'D I SAY WRONG?!

I'M SORRY, WHATEVER IT WAS!!!!

PETER--!

PETER--!!!

...pumpkin... eater...had a... a wife...

ARE YOU OKAY?!?

JEEZ, DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE *DYING* AGAIN! BECAUSE THAT WOULD SUCK BEYOND--

NO... NO, IT'S OKAY...

EXCEPT...IT'S NOT OKAY. SOMETHING'S HAPPENING...BACK AT STARK TOWER...

WHAT *KIND* OF SOMETHING? AND HOW DO YOU *KNOW?*

A BIG SOMETHING. AND I KNOW BECAUSE...

...BECAUSE IT'S *SPIDER-*RELATED.

OKAY, *NOW* YOU'RE JUST FREAKING ME OUT.

YOU AND ME BOTH.

HOLY CRAP.

WOW...

...TALK ABOUT YOUR WEBSITES.

PETER...DO YOU THINK THIS COULD POSSIBLY HAVE *ANYTHING* TO DO WITH--

I MEAN... YOU HAVEN'T REALLY TOLD ME EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU WERE, Y'KNOW...

OUT OF IT?

YEAH.

LONG STORY SHORT: I EMBRACED THE SPIDER.

YEAH, WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S EMBRACING YOU BACK.

NO KIDDING. STAY DOWN HERE AND MAKE SURE AUNT MAY DOESN'T HEAD UP.

DON'T DIE!

NO CHANCE. BEEN THERE, DONE THAT.

TONY! STEVE!

SING OUT, LOUISE!

SPIDEY SENSE IS GOING NUTS!

WHATEVER'S TRIGGERING IT IS UP *THIS* WAY! JUST UP AHEA--

CRIPES! THIS IS THE PLACE THEY HAD MY OLD SKIN... MY OLD BODY... STASHED.

WHAT KIND OF SPIDERS ARE--?

WAIT...I KNOW THEM. I DON'T KNOW WHY I KNOW THEM, BUT I DO.

THEY'RE PIRATE SPIDERS... MIMETIDAE FAMILY, GENUS ERO...

ALSO CALLED CANNIBAL SPIDERS SINCE THEY FEED ON...

...OTHER... SPIDERS...

THEY... THEY ATE MY CORPSE!!!!

IT'S LIKE BEING TRAPPED IN A TROMA MOVIE!

GET AWAY! GET AWAY, YOU...

WHAT THE--?! IS THIS THAT GATEKEEPER CREATURE AGAIN...? THE ONE WHEN EZEKIEL...

NO. NO, THIS IS *DIFFERENT*. I CAN *SENSE* IT.

HOLY...?!

SHAK!

SHAK!

WHERE DID *THESE* COME FROM? WHAT'RE THEY... *STINGERS?*

SINCE WHEN DO *SPIDERS* HAVE *STINGERS??!?!*

WAIT...I THINK I...HAD A DREAM ABOUT THESE...WHEN...

Y'KNOW WHAT? I'LL SORT IT OUT LATER. RIGHT NOW...

GO WITH THE FLOW!!!!

HEY! COPYING MY MOVES! THAT'S CHEATING!

RIGHT. OF *COURSE* IT CHEATED. IT'S *PIRATES.*

GOTTA FIND A WAY TO CONTAIN IT, BEFORE IT'S--

--TOO LATE...

TO BE CONTINUED IN MARVEL KNIGHTS SPIDER-MAN #22

MARVEL HEROES HOTSPOT

TOM SEZ

It seems to me that the comics industry has fallen down in one respect of late: and that's in communicating directly with you, our valued readers. So we in the so-called Marvel Heroes editorial office have decided to take a stab at changing that. You've already seen letters pages return to a number of Marvel titles (not all of them mine), and there are more on the way, assuming we can eke out the time to put them together. Beyond that, I know there are some plans over at Marvel.com for some nifty new features--and there's also Joe Q's weekly Friday column over at Newsarama.com.

And now, there's this page, which is an experiment in going back to the classics. Part Bullpen Bulletins, part letters page, part something else, we in the Brevoort editorial office want to make it your one-stop shopping location for information and insight into what's coming up in our little line of books. We'll be attempting to run a page like this in any of our titles that doesn't have a letters page of its own. It'll be a place for us to mouth off to you, you to mouth off to us, and hopefully for everybody to have a good time. It's really easy for this sort of thing to fall into empty hype, though, so this is where we'll need your help. If you've got something you want to say, or a question you want to ask that's more universal than any one title, you can send it to me at mheroes@marvel.com, and I'll try to address it in the months that come.

But like I said, this is an experiment. I honestly don't know whether the time and the need for this kind of a page may be past. But I look at the popularity of the letters pages in books like *Powers* and *Invincible*, where you get to parley directly with the folks writing those books, and I figure there must be something to it. So it's up to you--if we don't get any sort of response to this page, we'll likely move on to something else.

And for those who might desire even more direct contact, I maintain two active thread-folders online, one at Comixfan.com and the other at JoeQuesada.com. I try to check in there at least once a week, so feel free to swing by and chat a bit.

Next month, I'll take a stab at filling this space with actual content! See you then!

Tom B 2

ITEM! *Wizard* Magazine recently released their End-Of-The-Year review, and named CAPTAIN AMERICA their pick for Book of the Year! While this'll come as no surprise to those who've checked out the Winter Soldier storyline that Ed Brubaker and Steve Epting have been producing, we hate to see any culture lover miss out on what's being described as perhaps the best CAP run in recent memory! Likewise, YOUNG AVENGERS creator Allan Heinberg received accolades as Breakout New Talent of the year (as much as any guy who's written for *Sex and the City* and *The OC* can be considered a new talent). And here's a special shout-out to our old friend Geoff Johns, who managed to snag the Man of the Year spot for his work for the guys uptown. Enjoy it while you can, Geoff--we'll get ya next year!

ITEM! NEW AVENGERS author Brian Michael Bendis recently set his word processor aside for a week in favor of a lei, as he and his charming wife Alisa journeyed to Hawaii, where the couple renewed their wedding vows following ten years of marital bliss. (And before some wise guy pipes up, no, it wasn't two years of bliss that Bendis padded out into ten.) Also attending was Marvel's own EIC Joe Quesada, who surprised all by staying awake all the way to the end of the ceremony! Here's a toast to the happy couple--and many more!

ITEM! Remember that cool, heartfelt painted issue of SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN we put out about a year back? Well, the creative partners behind that special issue, Paul Jenkins and Paolo Rivera, have reunited for a series of painted stand-alone specials each focusing on a different luminary in the Marvel line of stars! The first one, MYTHOS: X-MEN, comes out this month, and spotlights the earliest days of the X-Men. Paul and Paolo are already hard at work on entries featuring the Hulk and Ghost Rider, which'll be released every three or four months or so. So if what you're looking for is a sophisticated, stylish examination of just what makes the X-Men who they are, you could do worse than to flip through MYTHOS: X-MEN when it ships this month.

ITEM! Associate Editor Andy Schmidt has had his head in the clouds lately. He's been gazing skyward, and falling into an almost hypnotic daze. We were just about ready to fire him for slacking off when he revealed what was actually going on--he's been brainstorming with Keith Giffen about a mammoth project designed to reinvigorate many of Marvel's cosmic characters! All we can tell you right now is that it's called ANNIHILATION, and it'll be rolling your way across the cosmos the last week in March! So watch the skies!

ITEM! We can't reveal too much about it yet, but Mark Millar and Steve McNiven are putting together what will inevitably be the can't-miss Marvel U project of 2006. About all we can say at this point is--"Whose Side Are You On?" Stay tuned for further updates!

MEET YOUR EDITORIAL CREW! Tom Brevoort owns a vintage 1970s comic book spinner rack that's set up in his den. "Professor" Andy Schmidt has been teaching a course at the Museum of Comics and Cartoon Art on writing for comics. Molly Lazer recently performed live on stage with *American Idol's* Clay Aiken in his NYC holiday show. Aubrey Sitterson hasn't yet done anything worth mentioning, but he's young and we have high hopes for him!

ON SALE

BOOKS OF DOOM #3: Victor Von Doom, now a broken man, flees to Eastern Europe...and love is not the only thing that follows him there...

CAPTAIN AMERICA #14: The final showdown between Cap and the Winter Soldier!

FANTASTIC FOUR #534: Hulk vs. Thing: Raw!

FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-MAN #4: The Other, Part 10: the newest chapter in Spider-Man's life starts right here!

IRON MAN #5: For Tony Stark, the future of his career as Iron Man may depend on him revisiting his past...

IRON MAN: INEVITABLE #2: The Spymaster makes his first move--which means it's the armored Avenger vs. the Ghost!

MARVEL TEAM-UP #16: The League of Losers take on Chronok, but *when* will our heroes end up?

MYTHOS: X-MEN: The first clash between the X-Men and Magneto in full painted color!

NEW THUNDERBOLTS #17: The identity of the new Swordsman is revealed!

NEW AVENGERS #15: The time has come for the New Avengers to go public. Who will stand and declare themselves a New Avenger?

PULSE #13: The moment has arrived--Jessica Jones finally gives birth!

SENTINEL #3: Big robot smackdown!

SENTRY #5: The Sentry's psychiatrist must stop the most dangerous being on earth--but is that the Void? Or the Sentry himself?

SHE-HULK #4: Jen returns to Bone, Idaho to face the destruction caused by She-Hulk. But what danger awaits her in this sleepy little town?

SON OF M #2: A strange fate waits for Quicksilver as he is taken to Attilan by his estranged wife, Crystal.

SPIDER-GIRL #94: Guest-starring Hawkeye, Scarlet Witch, and Ant-Man! What will Spider-Girl do now that she's seen a vision of her own death?

SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED #13: Our favorite arachnid gets a bug, and the Rhino super-sizes it at a local fast-food joint.

SPIDER-WOMAN: ORIGIN #2: Young Jessica Drew's life takes a scary turn as she joins the shadowy terrorist organization Hydra!

THE THING #3: More fun and games at the deadliest place on earth!

X-FACTOR #3: An assassin has targeted a member of X-Factor. Who?

X-MEN: THE END--MEN & X-MEN #1: It's the endgame for the X-Men of the future!

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MARVEL MAX

22

THE

TM

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 11 OF 12

REGINALD HUDLIN • PAT LEE

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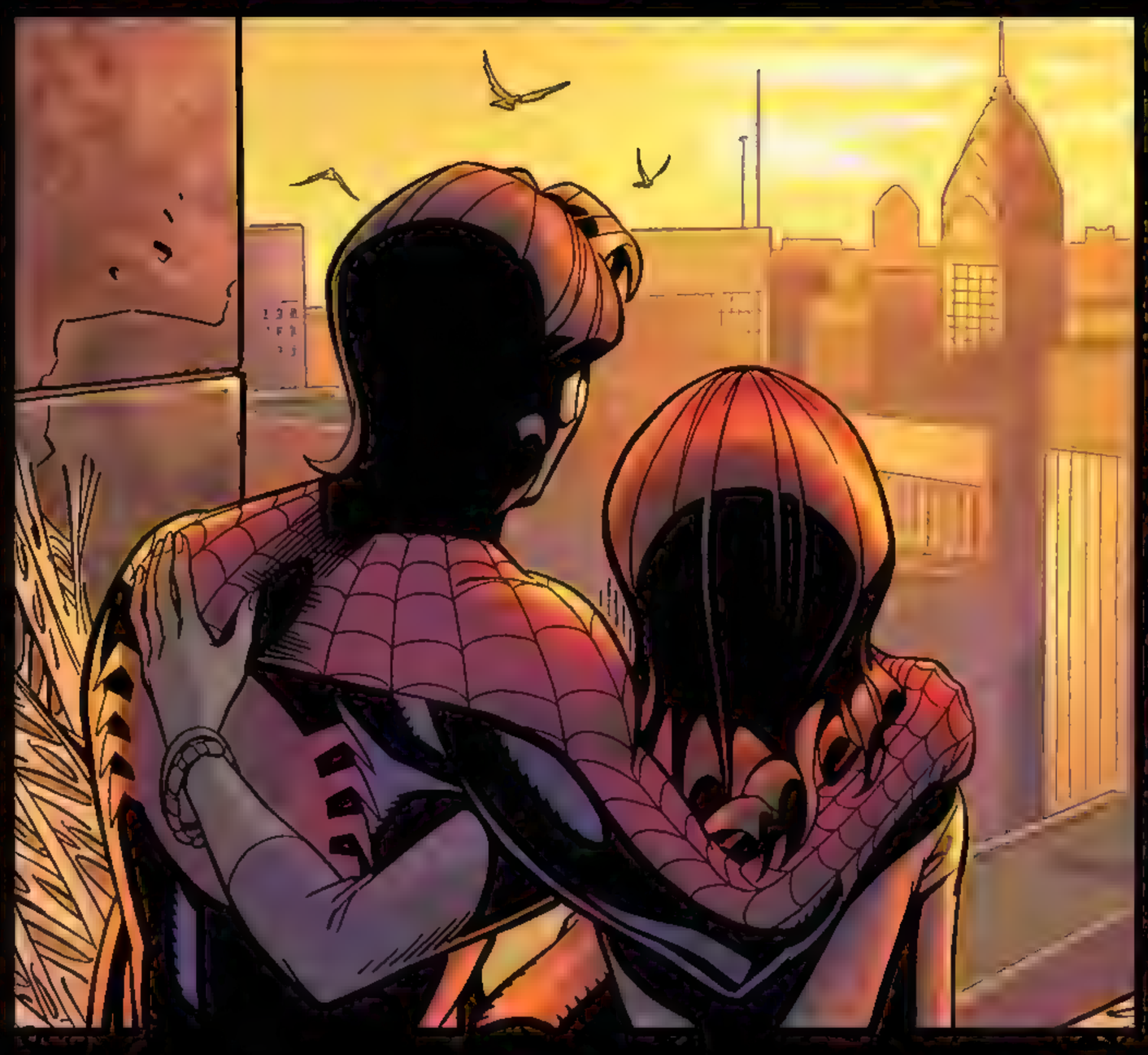
THE OTHER

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 11 OF 12

PREVIOUSLY IN *Friendly Neighborhood* SPIDER-MAN #4



Spider-Man has returned… but something else has returned with him!

A vicious battle between Spider-Man and Morlun seemingly claimed the lives of both predator and prey, but then a shadowy figure emerged from Peter Parker's corpse—and broke out of Avengers Tower!

That stranger was Peter himself, who shed his skin and was born again. With that rebirth came certain new powers and enhanced abilities… and the injuries that had claimed his life miraculously healed.

But in the process of recovering, Peter embraced the totemic forces of the spider, and that spider, The Great Weaver, has embraced him back.

Now, something else has emerged from Peter's corpse—a new creature which has covered Avengers Tower in webbing and fled into New York City…

"DESTINY'S CHILD"

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SPIDER-MAN: THE OTHER--EVOLVE OR DIE PART ELEVEN:

DESTINY'S CHILD

OKAY, LEMME GET THIS STRAIGHT:

I COME BACK FROM THE DEAD... A MILLION PIRATE-SPIDERS EAT MY REMAINS...

...TRANSFORM INTO A *COHESIVE CREATURE* THAT PUNCHES ITS WAY THROUGH A VIBRANIUM-REINFORCED WALL...

...AND--OH, BY THE WAY--APPARENTLY I'VE DEVELOPED A CASE OF LOGAN ENVY 'CAUSE A STINGER OR TALON OR SOMETHING POPPED OUT OF MY ARM.

FIGURES THAT COMING BACK FROM THE DEAD IS THE *LEAST* UNUSUAL THING TO HAPPEN TO ME THIS WEEK.

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SPECIAL THANKS TO PETER DAVID

THE OTHER LOGOTYPE AND DESIGN BY RIAN HUGHES

IT...SHE... WHATEVER...IS FAST...

...BUT WEB-SLINGING BEATS SPIDER-BOUNCING ANY DAY.

THWIP

HELLO? DO YOU *TALK?* DO YOU HAVE A *NAME?*

DO YOU LIKE *PIÑA COLADAS?*

OH, SWELL.

IT'S LIKE TRYING TO HOGTIE WET SAND.

LOOK, I'M NOT TRYING TO HURT YOU!

HURT... YOU...?

OKAY...YOU CAN TALK. I'M NOT SURE WHETHER TO BE RELIEVED OR EVEN MORE CREEPED OUT.

NOW...WHO OR WHAT ARE YOU? DO YOU EVEN KNOW?

EVEN... KNOW?

LOOK, IF YOU'RE JUST GONNA REPEAT--

REPEAT. YES.

YOU ARE...SO I AM.

ONE LIVES... OTHER MUST LIVE.

ONE DIES... OTHER MUST DIE...

ALL GOOD.

"ALL GOOD" MY FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-BUTT! "ONE DIES?" SORRY, BEEN THERE, *DIED* THAT. BOUGHT THE--

--STINGERS?!

AGAIN? BUT SPIDERS DON'T HAVE STINGERS!

WHAK

NOT YET.

WHUD

BUT IN FUTURE?

SPIDERS EVOLVE...

...YOU EVOLVE.

MORLUN RETURNED FOR YOU. WAS HIS TIME TO *FEAST*. YOUR TIME TO *DIE*.

AND DIE YOU *DID*.

THE GREAT WEAVER SAID, NO. NOT YOUR TIME. BROUGHT YOU BACK.

BUT GREAT WEAVER *NOT* ALONE.

ANOTHER BECAME ANGRY. SAID THERE MUST BE A *COST*.

WHAT'RE YOU SAYING? THAT A COUPLE OF *DEMI-COSMIC ENTITIES* DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO THAN ARGUE ABOUT WHETHER MY NUMBER WAS UP?

YES. EXACTLY. YOUR NUMBER... *WAS* UP. AND I AM...*OPPOSITE* NUMBER.

SMAASH

YOU DEFINE ME. I DEFINE YOU.

WHAT YOU ARE, I AM NOT. WHAT YOU ARE NOT, I AM.

AS YOU EVOLVE...I EVOLVE.

EVOLVE OR DIE.

WHOA!

SOMEONE CALL AN EXTERMINATOR!

TAKE IT EASY, FOLKS! EVERYTHING'S UNDER CONTROL!

AND, UH... JUST SO YOU KNOW, THOSE LITTLE GUYS WEREN'T WITH ME.

AVENGERS TOWER...

LU-CY, I'M HOOOOME!

UHM. A LITTLE LEVITY SEEMED APPROPRIATE.

SO, WHAT THE HECK WAS *THAT* ALL ABOUT?

WE WERE GOING TO ASK *YOU* THE SAME THING.

MASTER STARK, MAY I SUGGEST WE CALL YOUR CLEANING SERVICE?

ABSOLUTELY, JARVIS.

I'LL HELP YOU CLEAN UP, JARVIS.

THANK YOU, SIR. BUT I THINK YOU'VE "HELPED" QUITE ENOUGH...

LATER...

...I SENT RICHARDS SOME SAMPLES OF WEBBING AND COCOON. MAYBE HE'LL BE ABLE TO GIVE US SOME INSIGHT. BUT UNTIL WE KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON FOR SURE, I'M GOING TO INSIST YOU STAY PUT.

"STAY PUT." WAITAMINUTE, TONY. I MEAN, I'M AS CONFUSED AS YOU ARE ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENED THIS LAST WEEK--

--OH, WHATEVER. YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT ANYWAY.

WE'RE **NOT** BLAMING YOU, PETER. WE'RE JUST TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT JUST WENT ON HERE TODAY. OUR SECURITY CAMERA CAPTURED THE ACTION, BUT WE STILL DON'T HAVE THE FULL PICTURE. UNTIL THEN, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO--

I KNOW, I KNOW. MORE TESTS.

I HAVE TO AGREE WITH TONY.

BIG SURPRISE.

NOK NOK

COME IN.

UH... LOGAN? WHAT'S UP?

FOR ONE, I CAN'T WALK AROUND BAREFOOT WITHOUT MY FEET STICKING TO THE FLOOR. HAVE TO WEAR SOCKS. AND YOU OWE ME SOME MONEY FOR DRY CLEANING.

THAT'S WHAT YOU CAME TO TELL ME?

YEAH, AND TO SEE HOW YOU WERE DOING.

REALLY...?

NOTHING PERSONAL, PETE. BUT SOMETHING DOESN'T SMELL RIGHT.

I WAS ABOUT TO TAKE A SHOWER.

YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. SOMETHING'S CHANGED IN YOU.

MEANING....?

HEY, GUYS. WHAT'S GOING ON?

MEANING... THIS WHOLE THING, IT *AIN'T* OVER.

CUTE SOCKS.

THANKS.

WHAT WAS LOGAN TALKING ABOUT, TIGER?

NOTHING. JUST BEING LOGAN, I GUESS.

THEN WHY SO GLUM?

WHAT'S *HAPPENED* TO ME, MJ? NONE OF THIS MAKES ANY SENSE.

YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT, PETER. COME, SIT DOWN.

I'VE GONE THROUGH THIS IN MY HEAD SO MANY TIMES.

I REMEMBER FIGHTING MORLUN... THINKING I WAS GOING TO BEAT HIM...FEELING THE RUG PULLED OUT FROM UNDER ME...

"I WAS ON THE GROUND LOOKING UP. AND MORLUN WAS HITTING ME AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN. I THOUGHT IT WOULD NEVER END...

"BUT IT *DID*. AND ALL I COULD SEE WAS THIS BRILLIANT LIGHT. AND EVERYTHING WENT SILENT AND THEN I *KNEW*...

"I KNEW WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE DEAD..."

...YET HERE I AM.

IT JUST DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT. I SHOULD BE DEAD, MJ. I SHOULDN'T BE HERE NOW.

BUT YOU *ARE* HERE, PETER. THANK GOD.

THAT CREATURE SAID SOMETHING. SOMETHING THAT TIES INTO ALL OF THIS.

"EVOLVE OR DIE."

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

PETER, WHEN YOU WERE IN THE HOSPITAL, DO YOU REMEMBER *ANYTHING?*

NO. JUST IMAGES. FLASHES, REALLY. NOTHING CONCRETE. WHY?

WHY DO YOU ASK?

IT'S NOT IMPORTANT. WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT ANOTHER TIME.

YOU SURE?

I'M SURE.

"ANOTHER TIME, PETER.

"ANOTHER TIME."

EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE FINE, BABY. YOU LOOK TIRED. GET SOME REST, OKAY?

LATER. THE SANCTUM OF DR. STEPHEN STRANGE...

DOC, I DROP BY HERE SO OFTEN I SHOULD JUST CALL MYSELF A PATIENT.

I DON'T THINK "SORCERER SUPREMES" ARE COVERED BY HMO'S.

SO WHAT DOES YOUR MAGIC EIGHT BALL SAY NOW: "TRY AGAIN LATER"?

HEH. IT'S SUCH A PLEASURE TO STILL HAVE YOU AMONG THE LIVING THAT I EVEN ENJOY YOUR ATTEMPTS AT HUMOR.

WOW, THAT IS THE NICEST INSULT *EVER*. SO WHAT DO YOU SEE?

SOMETHING VERY INTERESTING.

"INTERESTING?" SCARY WORD, DOC.

MY INTENTION IS NOT TO SCARE YOU, PETER. INDEED, I'M NOT CONVINCED THERE'S ANY REASON *TO* BE SCARED.

BASICALLY, PETER, YOU'RE IN THE CENTER OF A *WEB*...

A COSMIC WEB THAT YOU CAN'T FEEL PHYSICALLY, BUT THAT IS VERY REAL NONETHELESS.

AM I THE *SPIDER?* AM I THE *MEAL?* WHICH AM I?

THAT'S THE ODD PART.

DEPENDING ON YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WELL...

YOU COULD BE EITHER...

...OR *BOTH.*

"ONE ...OR THE OTHER."

EXCUSE ME...?

NOTHING.

SORRY I COULDN'T BE MORE CLEAR. THE COSMIC FORCES YOU DISTURBED WITH YOUR RETURN HAVE MADE A BIG UPROAR IN THE NETHERWORLDS. MAKES IT HARD TO READ.

DOES THAT MEAN *MORE* BAD GUYS AFTER ME?

IT MEANS THERE WILL BE A STRONG *CORRECTIVE* RESPONSE.

I THINK I MET HER.

ANY *MORE* GOOD NEWS?

WELL, YOU SEEM TO HAVE GOTTEN OVER THAT EYE-GOUGING THING JUST FINE.

THANKS, DOC.

LATER...

PETER?

AUNT MAY? HEY--WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

BRINGING YOU SOMETHING HOT. YOU LOOKED SO COLD ON THAT SECURITY MONITOR.

YOU WERE WATCHING ME?

I'D WATCH YOU ALL THE TIME IF I COULD.

YOU KNOW, PETER, I MIGHT NOT BE CAPTAIN AMERICA, BUT YOU CAN ALWAYS CONFIDE IN ME. I'M HERE FOR YOU. I HOPE YOU KNOW THAT.

GIANTS

OF COURSE I DO.

THEN WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON IN THAT HEAD OF YOURS?

I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT.

WHY DON'T YOU *TRY.*

I FEEL... I FEEL LIKE I'M CHEATING.

CHEATING? CHEATING WHO?

I DUNNO... GOD?

I SHOULDN'T BE HERE. I DIED. BUT HERE I AM.

I DON'T SEE IT LIKE THAT.

THE WAY I SEE IT, YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN A *SECOND CHANCE.*

BUT WHY? WHY ME?

WHY *NOT* YOU, PETER? I FIRMLY BELIEVE-- BELIEVE TO MY CORE-- THAT EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON. OURS IS NOT TO QUESTION WHY.

I WISH IT WERE THAT EASY.

PETER, YOU CAN DISMISS THIS AS THE RAMBLINGS OF AN OLD WOMAN IF YOU WANT, BUT I'M GOING TO SAY IT ANYWAY.

YOU ARE *ALIVE,* PETER. AND THAT IS WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT. ALL THAT MATTERS NOW... ...IS WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO FROM *THIS DAY ON.*

THIS IS A *BLESSING*, SON, NOT A CURSE. I KNOW YOU'RE NOT USED TO SEEING THINGS THAT WAY, BUT I HOPE YOU *WILL* THIS TIME.

YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN ANOTHER CHANCE AT LIFE. DON'T YOU SEE HOW WONDERFUL THIS IS? IF YOUR UNCLE BEN CAME BACK TODAY, I...

...I WOULD THANK MY LUCKY STARS.

YOU'VE *ALWAYS* BEEN SPECIAL. THIS JUST PROVES IT.

YOU'RE SOMETHING ELSE, AUNT MAY, YOU KNOW THAT?

NO, PETER. YOU ARE.

AND I HAVE EVERY FAITH THAT GREAT THINGS ARE IN STORE FOR YOU.

"EVERYTHING IN YOUR LIFE HAS BROUGHT YOU TO THIS POINT.

"WHATEVER WAITS FOR YOU...

"...AND I'M SURE IT'S BIG...

"...YOU'LL BE READY FOR IT."

TO BE CONCLUDED IN AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #528

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THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

THE OTHER

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 12 OF 12

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THE OTHER

EVOLVE OR DIE

PART 12 OF 12

PREVIOUSLY IN MARVEL KNIGHTS SPIDER-MAN #22

Spider-Man has returned!

A vicious battle between Spider-Man and Morlun seemingly claimed the lives of both predator and prey, but then Peter Parker shed his skin and evolved. Reborn with new powers, enhanced abilities, and miraculously healed injuries, Spider-Man thought that life was finally going his way… that is, until he remembered how he had returned.

Peter had embraced the totemic forces of the spider, and that spider, The Great Weaver, embraced him back.

Soon after, a new creature emerged from the corpse shell that Peter had shed and told Spider-Man that she was the counterpoint-- the living, breathing answer-- to his unorthodox return. Before he could learn more, she escaped to an unknown location and concealed herself within a cocoon.

While Spider-Man has sought counsel from those closest to him, anxieties have plagued him—specifically, the consequences of his miraculous resurrection and his wholehearted embrace of the totemic spider god.

"POST MORTEM"

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DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING FROM THE MOMENT WHEN MORLUN ATTACKED YOU IN THE HOSPITAL AND YOU--

--DID UNTO HIM AS HE WOULD HAVE DONE UNTO YOU?

ANYTHING, PETER? ANYTHING AT ALL?

AIIIGGHH!

JUST HIM SCREAMING. THAT'S ALL. IT'S AS IF--

--IT'S AS IF I *WAS* THERE, AND I *WASN'T* THERE, BOTH AT THE SAME TIME.

HMMM...

...HMM... HMMM... HMMMMMM...

OKAY, TONY, I'LL GIVE YOU ONE *HMMM* ON PRINCIPLE, TWO BECAUSE YOU'RE MY BOSS, BUT THREE IS PUSHING IT.

ACTUALLY, THAT WAS FOUR.

SWELL.

I'M DOOMED.

STOP BEING DRAMATIC. YOU'RE NOT DOOMED.
GOOD.
AS FAR AS I KNOW.
NOT HELPING.
CAN I GET UP NOW, OR DO I HAVE TO CHECK WITH IGOR FIRST?
YOU CAN GET UP. I APOLOGIZE FOR THE FREQUENT TESTS, BUT WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU WAS--
WEIRD? CREEPY? YUCKY?
--ANOMALOUS.
YEAH, YEAH, YOU WITH YOUR BIG CITY WAYS AND YOUR FANCY TALK...
I'VE SEEN PEOPLE COME BACK AFTER BEING NEAR DEATH, OR EVEN PAST WHAT I THOUGHT WAS THE POINT OF NO RETURN. BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE COME BACK TO LIFE BY LITERALLY CRAWLING OUT OF HIS OWN DEAD SKIN.
I'M TELLING YOU, TONY, THE RIGHT SKIN LOTION MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THE *WORLD*.
HAVE YOU NOTICED THAT THE CLOSER WE GET TO UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTHS, THE MORE JOKES PER MINUTE YOU MAKE?
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
NO?
SO THIS TALKING HORSE WALKS INTO A BAR, AND--
I REST MY CASE.

BUT YOU HAVE ALL OF PETER'S OTHER MEMORIES?

YEAH, I--

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, ALL OF *PETER'S* MEMORIES. I'M PETER.

YES, YOU ARE.

BUT THEN, SO WAS THE BODY LAYING DEAD ON A GURNEY UPSTAIRS, THE BODY THAT HAS NOW... DISAPPEARED.

WE'VE HAD IMPERSONATORS BEFORE, YOU KNOW. AND WHILE ALL MY INSTINCTS SAY THAT THIS IS YOU, I HAD TO ASK ANYWAY.

HOW DOES ASKING IF I REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED TO MORLUN HELP PROVE THAT I'M ME?

BECAUSE ONLY YOU WOULD ADMIT TO THE GAP IN MEMORY. AN IMPERSONATOR WOULD WANT TO MAKE SURE THERE WERE AS FEW GAPS AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO EASE SUSPICION.

HE WOULD ALSO TAKE STEPS TO DUPLICATE ALL THE INJURIES YOU'VE HAD, BUT THE SCANS SHOW THAT EVERY WOUND YOU'VE EVER INCURRED HAS BEEN HEALED.

YOU'RE BLESSED, PETER. YOU'VE GOT WHAT EVERY HUMAN BEING HAS ASKED FOR: A FRESH START, A CLEAN SLATE, EVERY CELL BRAND NEW AND UNDAMAGED.

YOU'VE BEEN REBORN.

PETER?

THERE YOU ARE. I'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER THE PLACE FOR YOU. HERE'S YOUR COSTUME--

UNIFORM.

WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S COMING APART AT THE SEAMS. AND FIGHTING THAT...*THING* YOU TOLD ME ABOUT PROBABLY DIDN'T HELP. I'VE SEWN IT THE BEST I COULD, SO YOU CAN GO OUT WHENEVER YOU WANT.

WHICH REMINDS ME...SINCE PETER'S BEEN REBORN, I'VE BEEN WORKING ON A REBIRTHDAY PRESENT, AND I SHOULD PROBABLY GET BACK TO WORK ON IT.

IS IT A PONY?

MARY JANE, DO US ALL A FAVOR--

WITH LANDING GEAR?

--AND SILENCE HIM SOMEHOW, ALL RIGHT?

THAT I CAN--

--DDMMMGGHH.

DID TONY GIVE YOU A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH?

HE SAYS I'M FINE, MJ. JUST FINE.

JUST FINE...

COULDN'T BE BETTER.

She's a wonderful woman, no mistake--

--but Martha Stewart she's not. This shirt's already starting to pull apart.

Not that I'm any better. And that's not what she's there for anyway, but still...

Waitaminnit...!

Of course!

Some days I'd like to take my brain right out of my head and kiss it.

Leo Zelinsky always *SAID* if I ever needed a favor, I should swing by...I'm sure he won't mind that I didn't call first...

LOOK, MISTER WAR-GUY--

WAR-*MAN*.

WHATEVER. THAT'S NOT A GOOD COLOR ON YOU. MAYBE A NICE HERRINGBONE.

I'M A NIGHT-KILLER. I NEED TO LOOK SLEEK. FORM-FITTING PANTS. NYLON JACKET. OR MAYBE PARACHUTE SILK.

NYLON. UH-HUH. PARACHUTE SILK.

YOU KNOW DISCO'S DEAD, RIGHT? BECAUSE IT WAS THOSE KINDA' FASHION CHOICES THAT KILLED IT, BOOM, LIKE A BULLET TO THE HEAD.

LOOK, I--

DING DONG

JUST A MINUTE, I NEED TO SEE WHO THAT IS. WHILE I'M OUT, I'LL TRY AND FIND SOMETHING YOU'LL LIKE.

SOMETHING WITH GLITTER, MAYBE.

HEY, LEO.

YOU. WELL, GOOD. NOW MY DAY IS COMPLETE.

WHAT'S WRONG, YOUR FINGERS STICK TO THE PHONE SO YOU CAN'T CALL, SET UP AN APPOINTMENT LIKE A NORMAL PERSON?

I'M IN A BIND, I NEED THIS THING FIXED. I FIGURED YOU COULD SQUEEZE ME IN.

SQUEEZING I CAN HANDLE. MY CLIENTS, NOT SO MUCH. I TOLD YOU, MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS AND FRIDAYS ARE GOOD GUYS. TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS, NOT-SO-GOOD GUYS. THIS IS THURSDAY.

I KNOW, I'M SORRY. DID I INTERRUPT?

YEAH, I GOT A CLIENT IN THERE, HE'S NEW TO THE BAD-GUY THING, VERY PICKY, VERY NERVOUS.

I'LL GO TALK TO HIM. TAKE OFF THE SHIRT AND I'LL HAVE A LOOK.

YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, LEO.

YEAH, FINE, WHATEVER.

MR. WAR-GUY?

WAR-MAN.

OPJAKIUCXVBU SKLADLEKNÁ JDFPOD AGHDJVOIBXCCVPFO SKLDFJSLPLS.

NO *WAY*. I WAS HERE *FIRST*! I DON'T CARE *WHO* IT IS, I--

WAIT A SEC...*WHO'D* YOU SAY IT IS?

OPJAKIUCXVBU SKLADLEKNÁ JDFPOD AGHDJVOIBXCCVPFO SKLDFJSLPLS

PAD PAD PAD SLAM!

HE SAID HE'LL COME BACK TUESDAY AND TO TELL YOU HE'S NOT AFRAID OF YOU.

WELL, I SEE *SOME*ONE'S ALREADY WORKED ON THIS. FUNNY, I DIDN'T KNOW HELEN KELLER WAS STILL ALIVE.

HEY! MY WI--

THAT IS, SOMEONE VERY CLOSE TO ME DID THAT AND--

BOOM!

WHAT THE--

I HEARD A BOOM. YOU HEAR A BOOM? I'M ALMOST CERTAIN I HEARD A BOOM.

WAIT HERE.

DID YOU THINK I WAS PLANNING TO GO TO A HOEDOWN? IN THESE SHOES?

Whatever happened, it killed the power to this whole area. I can hear sirens, but where--

Oh, no...

...looks like the construction site undermined the foundation of that apartment building.

No telling how many people are trapped in there.

HELP... SOMEBODY, HELP...WE'RE IN HERE!

OKAY, EVERYBODY MOVE BACK IN CASE THIS COLLAPSES...MOVE ON BACK...

COME ON... COME ON...JUST A LITTLE...BIT... MORE--

GOT IT!

GO, GO, GO, GO!

Good, the cavalry arrives...

IS THERE ANYONE ELSE TRAPPED ON THIS FLOOR?

I DUNNO...WE BARELY GOT OUT OURSELVES, I--

JENNIFER!

MA'AM?

MY DAUGHTER... SHE WAS RIGHT BEHIND ME! I HAVE TO GO BACK--

YOU CAN'T, THE WHOLE PLACE IS ABOUT TO COME DOWN!

NO--

IT'S ALL RIGHT...I'LL GO IN AFTER HER. JUST LET ME WEB THIS IN PLACE--

HURRY, PLEASE, SHE HAS ASTHMA, AND ALL THIS DUST--

I'LL FIND HER, I PROMISE. NOW PLEASE, GET AWAY FROM ALL THIS BEFORE--

DON'T WORRY, I'LL MAKE SURE SHE GETS CLEAR.

The whole place is starting to come down...I don't have much time, but where do I even start? I can't even see five inches in front of my--

--what the...?

I can see...it's pitch black in here but I can see. How the hell--

"STRENGTH. SENSES. AGILITY."

THESE WERE THE SIMPLEST TOOLS WHICH YOU HAD BEEN GIVEN. THE ONES A *CHILD* WOULD FIND *EXCITING*...

...AND *STOP* BEFORE ANYTHING *MORE* EXCITING BUT ALSO MORE *DISTURBING* WAS DISCOVERED.

"THE *CHILD* NEVER *ASKED*... AND THE *MAN* NEVER *RETURNED* TO THE QUESTION--

"--WHAT *HAPPENS* WHEN YOU *MERGE* A *MAN*...WITH A *SPIDER*?

"FIND WITHIN US THE GIFTS YOU DID NOT KNOW YOU POSSESSED... THE STRENGTHS YOU WERE AFRAID TO CALL YOUR OWN.

"BE THE MAN YOU ARE... BUT NOW, AT LAST... EMBRACE *THE OTHER.*"

HELP... OVER HERE... HELP...

IS...IS ANYONE THERE? I CAN'T SEE...I CAN'T--

I'M HERE. DID YOU SEE ANYONE ELSE? I'M LOOKING FOR A YOUNG GIRL--

I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING, NOW GET ME OUT OF HERE, PLEASE!

I CAN'T LEAVE...I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEONE...BUT I CAN SHOW YOU THE WAY OUT.

JUST FOLLOW THE WEB-LINE, IT'LL TAKE YOU FAR ENOUGH UP TO SEE THE WAY OUT.

HERE YOU GO.

That's funny...I'm picking up some kind of vibration through the webbing.

I wonder...

Yes...there it is again.

Vibrations. Traveling through the walls and into the webbing.

The way a spider can feel it when something is caught on its web.

And water... falling onto floors.

--and--

And--

I can feel it...as debris slides into a ruined room on the next floor.

SCRAPE-
SCRAPE-
SCRAPE-

Yes!

JENNIFER...?

...HHHHHHHHH...

She's barely conscious... can hardly breathe with all the dust. Have to get her out of here, fast, before--

--before *THAT* happens.

Okay, Peter...the way out is closed. Problem two is...which way now?

Problem one is...how do I carry her *AND* keep both hands free to dig our way out of here?

Waitaminnit...spiders carry their young on their backs. I know I can adhere to walls with the tips of my fingers, but I've never tried to--

Well, I guess there's a first time for everything, and this is definitely it.

I can feel her settling on my back...the same feeling when I crawl up the side of a building.

Well, *THIS* is going to save me no *END* of money buying backpacks. And best of all--

--the hairs on my arm are picking up the faintest trace of wind, just the way a spider's skin does. And the breeze is coming--

--from *THIS* direction.

HANG ON, JENNIFER--

--WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE!

OUTTA THE WAY! SHE'S COMING DOWN!

JENNIFER! NOOOOOOO!

...JENNIFER...?

SHE'S OKAY.

SHE'S OKAY.

SHE'S OKAY...

--ONE OF THE MOST AMAZING RESCUES THIS REPORTER HAS EVER SEEN.

AN ACT OF UNQUESTIONABLE HEROISM BY THE MAN MOST OF NEW YORK THOUGHT WAS DEAD JUST A FEW DAYS AGO.

THOUGH WHAT HAPPENED TO HIS SHIRT IS ANYBODY'S GUESS.

PERHAPS THE WEB-SLINGER IS GOING FOR A NEW, BUFF LOOK. EITHER WAY, THE MOTHER OF THE YOUNG GIRL RESCUED TONIGHT COULDN'T BE HAPPIER--

I KIND OF LIKE YOU WITHOUT THE SHIRT.

YEAH?

AS LONG AS IT WAS A CHOICE THING AND NOT MY SEWING.

NEVER.

MMMM.

SO WHY THE FAR-OFF LOOK, LOVER? YOU DID GOOD TONIGHT.

I KNOW. THESE NEW ABILITIES--

WELL, MAYBE NEW. THAT'S THE THING.

THE DAY I WAS BITTEN BY THAT SPIDER WAS MAYBE THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE.

THAT NIGHT...NOT SO MUCH.

SEE, I ALWAYS LOVED SCIENCE FICTION AND HORROR MOVIES. *FORBIDDEN PLANET. THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL.*

THE FLY.

"IT WAS ONE OF THE SCARIEST THINGS I'D EVER SEEN. AND I THOUGHT--

"--IF THAT'S WHAT YOU GET WHEN YOU GENETICALLY CROSS A MAN WITH SOMETHING AS HARMLESS AS A *FLY*--

"--HOW MUCH *WORSE* WOULD IT BE...WHAT KIND OF *HORROR* WOULD YOU GET...BY GENETICALLY MERGING A MAN...WITH A *SPIDER?*"

I WAS SO SCARED, MJ...SO SCARED...

WELL, NOT THAT TIME, ANYWAY, BUT STILL--

BUT IT PASSED, RIGHT? I MEAN, ONCE YOU SAW WHAT YOU COULD DO...AND YOU DIDN'T GROW SIX ARMS--

YEAH. I GOT OVER IT.

BUT I ALSO NEVER LOOKED TOO CLOSELY AT MY POWERS. I ACCEPTED WHAT JUMPED OUT AT ME, BUT DIDN'T POKE MUCH BENEATH THE SURFACE.

I THINK PART OF ME WAS AFRAID THAT IF I LOOKED TOO CLOSE, WHAT I'D FIND...WOULDN'T BE PRETTY. AS I GOT OLDER, I JUST ACCEPTED THE LIMITS OF WHAT THE KID-VERSION OF ME HAD BEEN *WILLING* TO ACCEPT.

BUT NOW I THINK...MAYBE THERE'S EVEN MORE TO THE POWERS I GOT THAT DAY, AND MAYBE I CAN USE THEM TO HELP PEOPLE MORE THAN I EVER IMAGINED. TONIGHT, IF I HADN'T BEEN OPEN TO THOSE POWERS, I MIGHT NEVER HAVE REACHED THAT GIRL IN TIME.

BUT YOU DID, PETER. SO YOU SHOULD FEEL GOOD ABOUT THAT.

AND THAT'S SOMETHING *I'VE* BEEN THINKING ABOUT.

WHEN YOU...CAME OUT OF YOU AND WERE, WELL, ***REBORN***...ALL OF YOUR OLD INJURIES WERE HEALED, WE KNOW THAT, BUT MAYBE...MAYBE YOU WERE HEALED ON THE INSIDE AS WELL.

HOW SO?

THIS IS ***YOU***, PETER, I KNOW THAT. BUT MAYBE WE CAN THINK THAT THERE'S PETER ***NOW*** AND PETER ***THEN***...AND ALL THE MISTAKES YOU MADE, ALL THE THINGS YOU REGRET... THEY ENDED WITH PETER ***THEN***.

YOU'RE PETER ***NOW***. REBORN. NEW. FREE OF THE PAST. WHATEVER PETER ***THEN*** DID, YOU'RE FREE OF THAT.

YOU'VE GOT A FRESH START, TIGER. HOW MANY PEOPLE EVER GET THAT?

HAVE I TOLD YOU LATELY HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU?

YEAH.

BUT AS LONG AS YOU'RE STARTING OVER, YOU MAY AS WELL STICK WITH THE THEME, AND TELL ME ALL OVER AGAIN.

I LOVE YOU.

I LOVE YOU.

AND I LOV--

YEP. IT'S HIM, ALL RIGHT.

NO QUESTION.

GOOD.

SO I GUESS IT'S TIME TO GET BACK TO WORK.

SPIDER-MAN: THE OTHER--EVOLVE OR DIE PART TWELVE:

POST MORTEM

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